

**HOWARD KIMELDORF INTERVIEWS FOR *REDS OR RACKETS*?**  
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**ARCHIE BROWN OF ILWU LOCAL 10, COMMUNIST PARTY**

**INTERVIEWEE:** ARCHIE BROWN

**INTERVIEWER:** HOWARD KIMELDORF

**SUBJECTS:** COMMUNIST PARTY; YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE; INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD; MARINE WORKERS INDUSTRIAL UNION; *WATERFRONT WORKER*; JOB ACTIONS; SCREENING; LANDRUM-GRIFFIN ACT; MECHANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION AGREEMENT OF 1960; *PEOPLE'S WORLD*; UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS; ALBION HALL; COMINTERN; GERMAIN BULCKE; HARRY BRIDGES; BILL BAILEY, POPULAR FRONT, EARL BROWDER, WORLD WAR II

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[00:00:00] **HOWARD KIMELDORF:** [. . .] so that we don't have any problems.

[00:00:01] **ARCHIE BROWN:** Oh, am I to spell my name?

[00:00:04] **HOWARD:** Please.

[00:00:04] **ARCHIE:** A-R-C-H-I-E, first name. B-R-O-W-N. That's it.

[00:00:10] **HOWARD:** Okay, like it sounds.

[00:00:11] **ARCHIE:** Nothing else.

[00:00:11] **HOWARD:** Nothing complicated. Okay. Why don't you just tell me how you got started as a longshoreman, and your political background leading into that.

[00:00:24] **ARCHIE:** Well, there had been—as anybody that would take a look at the situation during those years—there had been considerable unemployment and distress and hunger and, of course, resentment on the part of many people because of the bad economic situation. There had been many activities aimed towards gaining something to eat for that matter and, really, jobs, some kind.

That era was during the early thirties, and then in—well, I knew, everybody knew at that time, we knew that there was organization taking place among the longshoremen up and down the coast, particularly in San Francisco [California] . We were determined to help with that. Those of us who had gone through the experience of the early thirties and the organizing of the unemployed, the unemployed demonstrations, unemployed councils. We decided, yes, we would use our expertise that we had gained in helping to organize longshoremen or anybody else. So, during those years, the early thirties, I became a member of the Young Communist League [YCL] and then a member of the Communist Party later on.

[00:02:36] **HOWARD:** How old were you at this point?

[00:02:39] **ARCHIE:** When I joined the Young Communist League, in 1929, I was 17 years old.

[00:02:48] **HOWARD:** You're a contemporary of Ben Dobbs [socialist and lawyer, associated with the YCL] , then, is that correct?

[00:02:51] **ARCHIE:** Yes, that's correct.

[00:02:53] **HOWARD:** He's working about the same time period.

[00:02:56] **ARCHIE:** I think so.

[00:02:57] **HOWARD:** He may have been a year or two older than you perhaps.

[00:03:01] **ARCHIE:** I don't know that I knew Benny during those particular years, but a few years later I know that he was around. He probably was there. Of course, he was in Los Angeles [California] , and I was here in the Bay area, San Francisco Bay area.

So, that's when we joined the Young Communist League and the Communist Party. We decided that we would help.

[00:03:28] **HOWARD:** That was in '29?

[00:03:29] **ARCHIE:** Well, no, '29 is when I joined the Young Communist League and the Communist Party. The organization of longshoremen didn't take place till several years later. When we found out about it, we said we would help in the organization.

[00:03:50] **HOWARD:** What year is that? Do you know?

[00:03:51] **ARCHIE:** Well, to be specific, I know because there was bulletins put out by the—well, whatever you want to call, the organizing committee that were organizing longshoremen here in San Francisco. There was bulletins put out on the waterfront as early as 1933. That's when we first found out about it. Some people might have known more about it earlier because they had to keep it secret, any organization. But they came out in the open, so to speak, in 1933. That is they being the ones who organized the union, we were reorganizing the union.

[00:04:30] **HOWARD:** That was separate from the party? The '33 effort? We're talking about the Waterfront Worker, and things like that?

[00:04:37] **ARCHIE:** Yes, that's correct. I see what you're driving at. You asked for some background, political background.

[00:04:42] **HOWARD:** Yeah, right.

[00:04:44] **ARCHIE:** I'm trying to give some political background leading up to the time that I began to participate in helping to organize the waterfront. I'll give some political background.

In 1933 is when I for one knew that the effort was being made by a group of rank and filers in the longshoremen—some who were communist, I knew that—to help organize the longshoremen. We had decided we would give all of our efforts to make that a success. We made our appeal—we being, at that time, I was in the Young Communist League—I wasn't working on the waterfront at that time. We made our appeal to the young people on the waterfront, young seamen, young longshoremen, and others who were working on the waterfront at that time, to join a union and to support the movement for organization. We put out material in our own name, in the Young Communist League, urging young workers to do that. It happened that in, I think it was February 1933, I was on a tour, along with somebody else, to hold meetings for the Young Communist League to push for the organization of unions. When we got to Los Angeles, San Pedro [California] to be exact, we had a meeting in a hall, which meeting was canceled because of pressure from what was called then the Red Squad of Los Angeles. We expected that, and so we secretly arranged for a different hall. They didn't know about that. Then when people came to the meeting, first off, we passed out a little note telling them to go to this other place, and we had a very successful turnout. All kinds of young longshoremen, seamen, cannery workers, and many other young people came to that meeting.

[00:07:26] **HOWARD:** Called by the Young Communist League?

[00:07:29] **ARCHIE:** Called by the Young Communist League. It was a meeting and a dance, which we held. That was attacked and broken up by the Red Squad and the American Legion Post, who came in with their oversea hats and little clubs and everything else. Came right into the meeting. So we stood our ground, and we told them that they gotta pay 15¢. They wanna come in? They gotta pay 15¢. They didn't know what to do with that one. They said, "What you're doing here is illegal."

Anyway, we had an argument backwards and forwards. I say, "Alright. We'll make a compromise. You want to arrest me? I will go with you." There was another guy who was making all kinds of noise. They arrested him, too. He turned out to be a provocateur. We didn't know that, of course. So two of us were arrested. The meeting and the dance went on. They let it go on. I was jailed, and then I was released on bail and so on and so forth.

So, then I came back here to here to San Francisco. Oh, no, I should say—I had my "trial," in quotes. Two-thirds of the jury were members of the American Legion [organization made up of veterans and promoting

issues relating to veterans] . At that time, there were so many cases, we were asking for help—we didn't have any money—from all kinds of attorneys. The attorneys were inexperienced. So inexperienced, that after I got found guilty, they didn't know how many days they had to file an appeal. They waited too long, so I lost my case and I was sentenced to 90 days.

[00:09:18] **HOWARD:** Did you serve it?

[00:09:19] **ARCHIE:** I sure did! Every bit of it. Yeah, I sure did.

[00:09:22] **HOWARD:** What was the charge that you were convicted of?

[00:09:23] **ARCHIE:** Disturbing the peace. Oh yeah. Listen, I want to tell you. You don't know what goes on. We used to have a little joke. We'd say, "What were you arrested for this time?" We were arrested so many times. So we'd say, "I was arrested on suspicion of being hungry, carrying concealed sandwiches, and refusing to eat when offered." That kind of thing. Everybody knew it was such farce, and it was! The whole thing was such a farce during those days. You fought for civil liberties. You fought against hunger. You fought for your right to strike. You fought for your right to organize. All in one ball of wax.

But, the trail, one sad thing about it—I didn't mind the 90 days. The damn trouble was, by the time I began serving my sentence, the strike had opened. I did my picketing. We went down to help them picket, and I did some picketing in Oakland [California] at Howard's for eight days. Then I had to go to jail for 90 days. By the time I came out, the strike was over. Just like that.

[00:10:29] **HOWARD:** [laughs] You missed the big strike.

[00:10:32] **ARCHIE:** That's where I was. Well, you can't help that.

There were some odds and ends. There were some leftovers, one of which were the scalers. The scalers chip and paint and clean the ships. In those days when they had coal burners, they had to clean the boilers, as they called it. This was really dirty, filthy work. Here in San Francisco, the ones who did were mainly Latino, Central Americans. They were the most exploited, robbed, cheated, oppressed section that you ever saw in your life. We were asked—I for one was asked after I got out of jail. I went and got work as a longshoremen. I was working as a longshoremen after the strike. Then they asked us to help with the scalers, so I went to the scalers and worked with them. Their strike continued after everything was settled, for a year.

[00:11:44] **HOWARD:** I didn't know that.

[00:11:47] **ARCHIE:** Wasn't that big that everybody knew. You will know about something, and that is that there was a lot of bitterness. A lot of fear. These people have always been oppressed. So it got to the point where some of them said, "It's not use. We cannot win. We gotta go back to work." The contractors, as we called the employers, which they are, tried to entice a number of them to get us to go back to work. We had a union meeting where this big issue was to be decided on a vote, yes or no, whether to accept the contractors' terms. It was a special called meeting. One of the few times I ever put on a suit because there was a dance young people had afterwards. I figured I'd go through, get through with the meeting, shouldn't last long, and go to the dance. That meeting resulted in a big fight, a physical fight, which some of us tried to stop. The peacemakers, I was one of them.

[00:13:01] **HOWARD:** How many people were in this union? Is it a separate union?

[00:13:05] **ARCHIE:** This union at that time was a separate local of the ILA [International Longshoremen's Association] , at that time.

[00:13:14] **HOWARD:** Sounds like you would belong to the offshore jurisdiction, but it didn't.

[00:13:18] **ARCHIE:** Not offshore. All the cleaning and painting was done on land.

[00:13:22] **HOWARD:** I guess, yeah.

[00:13:24] **ARCHIE:** The seamen—that's another story—the seamen finally took it over.

But at that time we had this meeting in a hall down on the waterfront on Clay Street. All during the strike, whether sunshine or rain, we'd look out the window in our hall—the longshoremen would often give us some work if there was some extra work. Otherwise, there was nothing to do. We did some picketing, so we'd stand there. We'd look at the hall, look out the window. It's on a second story. You look down; you could see a marquee. It was painted black, and we always thought it was sheet iron. That's what it looked like to us, but it was glass. The importance of that you'll see in a minute.

During this fighting in the hall that I told you about, everybody crowded out into the little hall that led down the stairs. The stairs was very narrow stairs. Nowadays, of course, they won't let you have such arrangement units. Very dangerous for fire. Everybody's trying to run down the stairs, trying to get away from the fighting and stuff like that. One old man, he decided that he would get away. Lowered himself through the window onto this marquee and stay there until the fighting was over. That he did. From the windowsill to the marquee is maybe four feet; then there's another ten feet to the sidewalk. So he jumped onto this glass, fell through, fell down on the sidewalk, and broke a couple ribs. He had a syphilitic heart anyway, so they put him in the hospital, he developed pneumonia, and he died. So they charged me and three others with murder. 1935.

[00:15:37] **HOWARD:** Ben Dobbs told me this case.

[00:15:39] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yeah.

[00:15:41] **HOWARD:** That's interesting.

[00:15:45] **ARCHIE:** Of interest about this case is you know the shades of Tom Mooney [political activist imprisoned for the murder of Warren K. Billings] . Because the whole issue of Tom Mooney had come up. You know who Tom Mooney is?

[00:15:57] **HOWARD:** Yes.

[00:15:57] **ARCHIE:** The reason I ask you is you'd be surprised how many people don't know Tom Mooney from bananas. Tom Mooney, who was a great hero, labor leader. Constantly in all of our struggles, we always raised the demand: Free Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings. He finally was freed, you know, by [California Governor] Culbert Olson.

[00:16:21] **HOWARD:** After 20 years, though, right?

[00:16:23] **ARCHIE:** Oh yeah. More than that. How long he was in there? '38 [sic] I think they let him go.

Anyway, the prosecutor's office in San Francisco is very touchy about Tom Mooney. We accused them of having another Mooney case. That really riled them. What happened was, that the poor guy went to the hospital. He didn't die right away; it was a couple days. Couldn't speak English; they had to have a Spanish attendant to translate. He told this guy—and it was all written down—that he jumped! We were charged with throwing him out of the window. He said he jumped.

[00:17:22] **HOWARD:** Now, when you say “we,” it was you and someone else?

[00:17:24] **ARCHIE:** Three others. Four of us were charged with murder.

[00:17:28] **HOWARD:** Why do you suppose they singled you out? I suspect—

[00:17:30] **ARCHIE:** Oh, they knew who I was. They knew—it was the chairperson of the relief committee, the chairperson of the strike committee, and so on and so forth. These were people, active people, in the union. They picked the four of us out. I thought it was a big joke. But they were serious, and they charged us with murder. First attempted murder, then with murder when he died. They chose the jury of course. At the last minute—there was two attorneys, Leo Gallagher and George Anderson, great labor attorneys. Both now dead, of course. They defended the other three, and I defended myself. So I could say things that they couldn't say, and so on. Finally these attorneys forced the prosecution to produce the statement. They magnanimously produced the statement right at the end. The jury was out exactly eight minutes and found us not guilty.

[00:18:56] **HOWARD:** Just blatant harassment then.

[00:18:57] **ARCHIE:** Yeah. Of course! [laughs] Of course, it was a great relief, and that was a great victory. Right after that, the strike was settled. Oh yeah. Right after that, the strike was settled.

[00:19:12] **HOWARD:** Let me go back a little bit here. I'd like to ask you a question about your own political involvement. Sounds like you were—

[00:19:18] **ARCHIE:** Can you hold that? Shut it off for a minute.

[00:19:19] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[pause in recording]

[00:19:22] **ARCHIE:** This story called “Hell on the ‘Front,” pamphlet put out during the strike or right after the strike. Before the scalers' strike was over. In the pamphlet, it had a scene where all these supposed-to-be goons, led by myself, come upon an unsuspecting seaman or longshoreman. We manage to kill him, but it's at night. Then somebody turns him over, and says, “Hey, Archie, it's the wrong guy!” And I say, “Well, it'll teach 'em a lesson.” That's the kind of dramatic crap they put out. [laughs]

[00:20:15] **HOWARD:** How did longshoremen relate to that? As a joke, or—?

[00:20:20] **ARCHIE:** You know, I don't think the pamphlet got very wide circulation, number one. Those who were knowledgeable, they thought it was a big joke, by and large. Some were angry. Some were very angry; they said, look what these sos-and-sos were doing, lying and so forth. The propaganda they put out. But for the most part, it was taken as a joke. They asked me, “Did you put the pamphlet out?” That sort of thing. [laughs]

[00:20:52] **HOWARD:** Get your name in print at least, if nothing else.

Let me ask you some questions before we proceed any further. Two questions. One is, how did you yourself become involved in radical political activity?

[00:21:05] **ARCHIE:** You're going back to before the era of the longshore strike.

[00:21:09] **HOWARD:** I just want to know what attracted you as an individual to the Communist Party ultimately, and, before that, any kind of radical activities you may have been involved in.

[00:21:18] **ARCHIE:** Well, I tell everybody that my first contact—is that the word? Knowledge about bosses and workers and class struggle had to do when I was on a freight train, coming from my hometown to the West Coast. I was 13 years old. I ran into this Wobbly, and he told me about these things. I didn't know exactly what he was talking about. What happened was, every once in a while these railroad bulls would give us an awful time, including beating us. So I listened more to the Wobbly then. Then, one time, they took us off the train and indentured us to fight a forest fire in Colorado.

[00:22:16] **HOWARD:** You were, what, hopping freights or something?

[00:22:20] **ARCHIE:** Oh yes. Riding freights. We were hopping freights, that's right. I forget the town in Colorado. They stopped us and took us all off and, "Fight a fire or else." So, this Wobbly said to me, "Come on. I'll show you how to get the hell out of this thing." He did. He led me by a path and stuff like that and got me out of there. That was my first contact with it.

When I came to the Bay area, my brother was here. He had a job on the newspapers, selling newspapers. "Hustling sheets," as we called it. But some of those jobs was fairly well-paid, in those days, considering the type of the job. You had a job, you had a spot where a lot of people bought the papers, and you made certain commission and stuff like that. When I finally got here, he also got me a job on the papers, but I was on the night papers.

[00:23:42] **HOWARD:** How old were you at this time?

[00:23:44] **ARCHIE:** Well, so I got here, maybe I went to work [makes noise with lips while thinking] as early as 15 years old. When I traveled on a freight train—I don't believe that I grew any between the age of 13 and 18. I didn't grow any. I had already had my height and weight and everything else. I was almost as big as I am now, almost as heavy as I am now, and so on. So I was able to get away with it.

[00:24:15] **HOWARD:** What did your parents do? If that isn't too personal.

[00:24:18] **ARCHIE:** No, it's all right. My parents—my father, who had nine children, was a what we would call a teamster. He'd be the one driver delivering meat, or the one driver delivering bread, like that. Then finally he ruptured himself [sic] so that he couldn't do that. I used to help him some and the other kids, too. So my oldest brother had come out here to California in the early twenties. Then he brought my father out here and decided I should come out. But they had no money to send me, so they said, "Ride the freights. You ought to be able to make it." So I rode the freights.

[00:25:04] **HOWARD:** At 13.

[00:25:05] **ARCHIE:** Yeah. So I learned a lot then. When I got here to Oakland, he got me a job also hustling papers, in Oakland right on Twelfth Street and Broadway. It was a good spot. But two blocks down was a free

speech zone! People were always coming, marching back and forth, and the cops were always down there raising hell. Wondered what that was all about. The big issue was [Nicola] Sacco and [Bartolomeo] Vanzetti. So I got acquainted about Sacco and Vanzetti. I wasn't sure about it. The cops come out and say, "Those goddamn Bolsheviks!" That's what they called everybody, "Goddamn Bolsheviks. Don't get mixed up with them, Brown." Well, I never got mixed up with them. I didn't know what the hell they were talking about.

Anyway, I wouldn't have gotten mixed up with them except that the bosses, the employers, decided to save money. There was two daily newspapers in Oakland. Two newsboys on every corner during the day. Each got a certain commission; each got a certain weekly payment or daily payment. They decided—just like they did, well, you're not acquainted here. They merged the circulation department of the [San Francisco] Examiner and the [San Francisco] Chronicle here in San Francisco.

[00:26:33] **HOWARD:** I was aware of that, yeah.

[00:26:34] **ARCHIE:** That's what they did in Oakland, way back in 1929. Way back then! And so, half the guys were gone. Then they said, "Because you're going to handle both newspapers, we're not going to give you that much commission. We're going to give you half the commission." So the guys said, "To hell with you." And organized a union. I didn't know a union from bananas, except what the Wobbly had told me. I was very sympathetic to them. They were all my friends; some were nuttier than a—I don't know. Some of them very off the wall, but they were my friends. They asked for help; I said "Sure!" I wasn't on the day papers—I was on the night papers. I was on the Chronicle. Making pretty good selling the Chronicle. But these guys got together and decided they wanted a union. They went to the [San Francisco] Central Labor Council and told them—I'll never forget that son of a bitch. He says, "Why don't you try it?!" So they organized their own union, and along came the Communists. They said, "We will help you." They had, they called it, the Trade Union Educational League [TUEL] at the time. The TUEL said, "We'll help you organize and strike," which they did. I was the one with them.

What happened was that one day, I went out with these guys. We were distributing some stuff, and I got arrested and couldn't sell my papers that night. They used that, told me "Well that's it, you're fired." My brother had to give me warnings not to fool with them. That was fine, so I said, "I'm fired." Of course, I never got another job until I went to work as a longshoreman practically. That's not true, but. . .

So then I joined the Young Communist League. The only ones who were—

Oh, I should tell you that right after the newsboys' strike, as we called it, the autoworkers, east Oakland—Chevrolet assembly plant, went on strike. They just couldn't stand it. The speed-up was horrible. Of course, what the other companies were doing is say, "We'll give you 10¢ for this operation." So you break your ass, and you'd work and work. Pretty soon, it was 5¢, not 10¢. Finally they just got to the end, and they struck. Nobody had enough experience and stuff like that. That strike, too, was lost. Well, not really, but at that time it was lost. Many people gained experience from that and knew how to organize better. But for them it was lost.

[00:29:42] **HOWARD:** Did the TUEL interject politics into the union organizing? Why were you attracted to it?

[00:29:49] **ARCHIE:** Because the TUEL came to give us a hand.



[00:29:57] **HOWARD:** But you, among a large number of people. Not very many of them actually followed the TUEL, did the mass work, and eventually joined the YCL. I'm just trying to figure out what was unique about you. Maybe that's a difficult question to answer.

[00:30:11] **ARCHIE:** Some people responded like I did, and some didn't. Some were only interested and only went as far as the strike called for, as far as they could see. Like, some of these newsboys, they didn't have a home in Oakland like I did. I had a family here. So I stayed. But they, for the most part, had to get the hell out and go elsewhere. Where there was no union organization or anything and do the best they can. So they got lost in it, but I stayed. I think my experience with this Wobbly, my experience with—

[END PART ONE/BEGIN PART TWO]

[missing audio]

—that their view on what was wrong with society was correct. I listened very carefully. See, you gotta understand. They came at a time of a worsening of the situation. Not where it was getting better, but a worsening of the situation. They said “There was gonna be a big crisis; there's gonna be 10 million unemployed. United States is going off the gold standard!” Well, I guess anybody who had any knowledge could see that coming, but not me. The United States is going off the gold standard? Sure enough, it did! Heard this communist say, “The United States is going off the gold standard.” It's going off the gold standard. “There's going to be 10 million unemployed.” There was 10 million unemployed. So on and so forth.

That convinced me that they knew what the hell they were talking about. I got more interested and began to read. Now, I guess one of the things—that was responsible for my involvement and getting more and more interested all the time was the fact that I was an avid reader. This was a personal habit that I had way back, since I was a kid. I read everything. I could digest what they gave me. In those days, to digest what they gave you was really something, I want to tell ya.

[00:32:33] **HOWARD:** So that's really the unique feature of you, is that you were able to read and understand the stuff that you did read, in a period when people didn't have access to a lot of educational materials and things like that.

[00:32:43] **ARCHIE:** I think so.

[00:32:43] **HOWARD:** Yeah?

[00:32:43] **ARCHIE:** I think that had something to do with it.

[00:32:48] **HOWARD:** Okay, let me ask you another set of questions then. This probably won't draw as much on your own experience, but you probably will know a little bit about it. That's the role of the Marine Workers Industrial Union [MWIU] before the strike, from, say, '32 to '34. What can you tell me about that?

[00:33:05] **ARCHIE:** Well, I don't think I'm the best person to give you the information on that. I'll have to search my memory and we'll talk about it. But what I knew about the Marine Workers Industrial Union was that, again, in the early thirties when we were talking about organizing unemployed and then the employed, we were cognizant of the attempt to organize, not only the longshoremen, but also the seamen. There were a number of communists, Young Communist League members, who were seamen. They attempted to organize the Marine Workers Industrial Union on the ships and on shore. There was a—

[00:34:05] **HOWARD:** Do you know approximately how many cadre were doing that?

[00:34:08] **ARCHIE:** How many cadre?

[00:34:09] **HOWARD:** Or members—I suppose most of the Marine Workers Industrial Union members were close to or in the party, right? Was it a viable mass organization?

[00:34:19] **ARCHIE:** See, I think in San Francisco it was. I think in San Francisco—I can't speak about the rest of the country; I don't know it too well, but in San Francisco, it was a viable mass organization among the seamen. They hated the goddamn SIU so much, and they were so discriminated against. Many of these people couldn't ship out anyway. They were seamen, but they couldn't get out of the hall anyway. So they were attracted to the Marine Workers Industrial Union by its program and because of the struggle. I used to attend the meetings of the Marine Workers Industrial Union in the hall which they had, I think, on Jackson Street. That, too, was raided and smashed during the strike. I think it was on Jackson Street that they had the Marine Workers Industrial Union Hall. It got to be academic as to how much of a mass organization they were. They did have a lot of influence. When the strike took place, the longshoremen were the basis for the strike. Some of the seamen, particularly those who were in the Marine Workers Industrial Union—and there were several ships organized under the Marine Workers Industrial Union—responded to the strike. But many ships didn't respond.

[00:36:03] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you a question here. I remember reading an article, must have been [Samuel Adams] Darcy at this point, not [William] Schneiderman [chair of the Communist Party of California]—right, Darcy was the—

[00:36:11] **ARCHIE:** He was a district organizer in California at that time.

[00:36:14] **HOWARD:** He's writing in 1933, and it's one of these internal documents. I forget what it is exactly, their monthly reports, and he's commenting that one of the weaknesses on the West Coast is that they have hardly any cadre at all assigned to the waterfront. He says there's only six people working on the waterfront in late 1933, and none of them are working longshoremen. Does that make sense at all?

[00:36:35] **ARCHIE:** I think that was for public consumption.

[00:36:37] **HOWARD:** You think so? Well, Darcy was never bashful about claiming credit for that thing, either. The '34 Strike.

[00:36:46] **ARCHIE:** I know he wasn't, and I know what kind of a person he was. I know all about that. I don't understand the statement about six cadres. What's he talking about, just San Francisco?

[00:36:59] **HOWARD:** San Francisco, yes.

[00:37:00] **ARCHIE:** He says there was six in early '33?

[00:37:00] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[00:37:03] **ARCHIE:** And none of them were longshoremen?

[00:37:05] **HOWARD:** None of them were working longshoremen.

[00:37:06] **ARCHIE:** None of them were working longshoremen?

[00:37:07] **HOWARD:** He said there were six men on the front assigned to the agitprop section of the waterfront in San Francisco.

[00:37:12] **ARCHIE:** Well, I will tell you something. In those days, you could be a longshoremen and you were lucky you worked two days a month. Because unless you were on the inside, unless you got picked—but that was your trade. Your trade was a longshoremen; that’s what you did. So, I don’t know what Darcy meant by “working longshoremen.” Beats me. I knew several guys down there. I can’t vouch now that they were working steady all the time. I don’t know that. They had a division and a system where there were steady gangs. Those men worked all the time. Then you had people on the waterfront—the shape-up. You know all about the shape-up? I think most of our members, most of the communists, were in the shape-up. I don’t know what else to tell you. I don’t know what else Darcy meant by that.

[00:38:12] **HOWARD:** What would you estimate were the number of people that were close to the Party working on the waterfront? See, what I’m trying to get at—let me tell you the reason I’m asking all these questions. It’s because I’m trying to compare the role of the left in New York with the West Coast. One of my theses is that they had a much stronger presence on the West Coast—people like the Marine Workers Industrial Union—than they did on the East Coast. To flesh it out even more, it seems that on the East Coast they were more active with the sailors but had no impact on the longshoremen. On the West Coast, it seemed to be almost the reverse.

[00:38:42] **ARCHIE:** They had their impact among the longshoremen. We did. Not among the seamen. Is that what you’re saying?

[00:38:47] **HOWARD:** Yeah, on this coast. But on the East Coast, it seems the opposite. That explains why the NMU [National Maritime Union] goes to the left in its earlier period, it seems to me.

[00:38:55] **ARCHIE:** You know, you may have a point. But, see, there’s something you gotta remember. Let’s leave the point about how many cadre there were; we’ll come back to that. Because I think you have to explore a certain era and get a couple of answers before we get to this. I started to say that when the strike took place, it was almost all longshoremen on strike. Very few ships struck. But, finally, a whole lot of ships were on strike. Why? Because the NMU was active in the longshoremen and says, “You ain’t gonna work.” Told the seamen, “You’re not going to work.” Not because they only told them in that way, but because the seamen were convinced that, “Hey, this is right. What we gotta do is organize just like the longshoremen did.” So there was that double play. You gotta have that in mind.

Then, you gotta understand the following: I don’t know—I do know. There was a different kind of development on the East Coast, but here, on the West Coast, the program was that the Marine Workers Industrial Union, who had a lot of influence but not too much in the membership—the program was to merge, to join the craft unions. Marine Cooks and Stewards, the Sailors Union of the Pacific, and the Marine Oilers and Watertenders. To go in there and join them and bring the energy and militancy to those organizations. This was followed consistently here and brought forth a lot of fruit. In the end, it was very successful.

They followed a different course on the East Coast. I don’t mean by that they didn’t go into the old SIU. But they had a different problem there, which you probably know about. Here, it became academic—before you asked me how many cadre was there—I don’t mean how many cadre, but what kind of influence did the Marine Workers Industrial Union have and so on and so forth. How many members did they have. I think it became academic because, if we recognize they had a lot of influence, they changed the character and the content of those craft unions.

Now, we come back to Darcy's statement. I don't know what part of 1933 he's talking about.

[00:41:54] **HOWARD:** I know—it was in the Party Organizer that he was talking about it, if that means anything.

[00:41:57] **ARCHIE:** Party Organizer, yeah. Well, I don't know what part of '33 he's talking about. I am aware that already in '33, I knew a number of people who were communists working on the waterfront. I knew my own self. I was not part of the organization; I was not part of the Party apparatus at that time. I was not on the waterfront. I didn't become that until after I got out of jail, which was after the '34 Strike. But during '33, I knew people working on the San Francisco waterfront, more than a half a dozen. I don't know what guys he's talking about. I couldn't tell you.

[00:42:46] **HOWARD:** Okay, so you certainly think that there was more to it than the six that he was talking about. That seemed like an incredibly small number to me, too.

[00:42:53] **ARCHIE:** I don't understand. I really don't understand what he's talking about.

[00:42:56] **HOWARD:** And particularly because he talked about it in the context of, "We're going to concentrate now our six cadre," and I'm thinking, if that's concentration, what's it all about?

[00:43:07] **ARCHIE:** I'm not sure.

[00:43:08] **HOWARD:** Maybe I'll have to talk to him. I understand he's still in New Jersey or something like that.

[00:43:11] **ARCHIE:** Is he? I don't have any idea where the hell he is.

[00:43:13] **HOWARD:** He was expelled from the party, wasn't he?

[00:43:16] **ARCHIE:** Well, I don't remember if he was expelled or he just left or what. I'm trying to think of that period of time.

[00:43:22] **HOWARD:** Was it over the [Earl] Browder thing?<sup>1</sup> Wasn't it?

[00:43:26] **ARCHIE:** I don't think it was over the Browder thing, was it?

[00:43:27] **HOWARD:** I thought it was.

[00:43:29] **ARCHIE:** Well, maybe you're memory's better than mine. I think Darcy had left before the Browder thing.

[00:43:35] **HOWARD:** Really?

[00:43:37] **ARCHIE:** That's my remembers.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1944, Darcy resigned his party offices in protest of General Secretary Earl Browder's position that the postwar period would bring about a continued alliance between the US and Soviet Union and a continuation of the Popular Front strategy. He was expelled from the party shortly thereafter.

[00:43:48] **HOWARD:** Is there any way that you could provide some sort of hard evidence about the impact of the Marine Workers Industrial Union on the maritime unions of the West Coast? I realize again that's a difficult question. Like recruitment, or resolutions that were passed, or any sort of recollections along those lines.

[00:44:08] **ARCHIE:** You know what would be good? If somebody—who in the hell would have a file?—on the Marine Worker.

[00:44:20] **HOWARD:** I can't find it, incidentally, at all.

[00:44:23] **ARCHIE:** Really?

[00:44:23] **HOWARD:** I think New York Public Library has it from '28-'32, but that's what I've been told. I haven't been back there to see it. They won't loan it so you have to go look at it there.

[00:44:32] **ARCHIE:** But what about here on the West Coast?

[00:44:35] **HOWARD:** Well, nobody that I know has it. No institution, I should say.

[00:44:41] **ARCHIE:** Jackson's dead. Henry Jackson—he was in the middle of it. Walter Stack, he would know something. Have you seen Walt?

[00:44:51] **HOWARD:** I haven't, no.

[00:44:52] **ARCHIE:** Alright, ask him. If there is anything. Bill Bailey.

[00:44:57] **HOWARD:** You know, I heard that name today, in fact.

[00:44:59] **ARCHIE:** Ask him. He was around the Marine Workers Industrial Union.

[00:45:02] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[00:45:05] **ARCHIE:** Who else that is still around in the MWIU at that time?

[00:45:09] **HOWARD:** Was [John] Schomaker?

[00:45:11] **ARCHIE:** No, no, Schomaker was probably somebody that was sent in for concentration work. Probably. I couldn't swear to that. But that's the way I remember it. For longshore, not seamen.

[00:45:26] **HOWARD:** Okay, so it's basically Bill Bailey and [Walter] Stack, right?

[00:45:29] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, Bill Bailey and Stack. That's all the left alive, as far as I know.

[00:45:35] **HOWARD:** Stack was mostly offshore, wasn't he? He may know about the onshore—

[00:45:40] **ARCHIE:** So was Bill. Bill sailed.

[00:45:41] **HOWARD:** Oh, Bill was a sailor? Okay.

[00:45:42] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, Bill sailed. Bill was a sailor.

[00:45:46] **HOWARD:** Any longshoremen that you know? Maybe it doesn't make that much of a difference.

[00:45:48] **ARCHIE:** Wait, wait, wait, let's take one thing. You were talking about the MWIU.

[00:45:52] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[00:45:53] **ARCHIE:** Alright, so I'm trying to tell you that you could find in the Marine Worker answers to some of the questions that you were talking about.

[00:46:07] **HOWARD:** Okay, these people have the Marine Worker, you're saying.

[00:46:07] **ARCHIE:** That's right. That's all I'm talking about here.

[00:46:10] **HOWARD:** Alright, fine, I may give them a call then.

[00:46:15] **ARCHIE:** You started with a certain question, I don't know what, I'm sorry. I really am a little bit confused. I don't know what we're doing. You started out with a question about the Marine Workers Industrial Union, about how much influence they had. That was the question, right?

[00:46:28] **HOWARD:** Right.

[00:46:31] **ARCHIE:** I think a good part of the answer is if you could find the paper, the Marine Worker [sic], that might be a good part of the answer. Of course Walt and Bill could probably supply it from their own memory. My impression about the Marine Workers Industrial Union is they had a lot of influence. A lot of influence with the seamen. But the seamen wouldn't join the MWIU because it was communist, and old-time seamen would lose whatever little investment, pensions, blah blah blah that they had in the craft union set up. But they listened very attentively to them. In the early days, there were the people that came with the Marine Workers Industrial Union that [Harry] Lundeberg pretended at least to listen to—he probably did—and helped to make the Sailors Union of the Pacific a militant organization. It was the Marine Workers membership who did that. So that's what I remember about it. That's what I can tell you.

[00:47:45] **HOWARD:** That's very helpful in itself, actually. Let me ask you about the '34 Strike. Now, I realize you were in jail, so—

[00:47:52] **ARCHIE:** I'm in jail, Howard, but go ahead.

[00:47:53] **HOWARD:** Okay, well, just generally, how would you characterize the strike? I've seen it characterized as everything from class conflict to just pure and simple trade union demands. I suspect the answer lies somewhere in the middle, but what are your feelings about it? Retrospectively, now we can look back over the years, and it seems to have been much more significant than simply another strike for union recognition.

[00:48:16] **ARCHIE:** I think you're right, what you just said. I think that it was one of the most important class battles that's taken place in these United States. One of the most important. I think that that war, that battle on the waterfront and the associated battles with it, if you want to put them all under one heading, laid the groundwork for a big change in United States labor and in relationship between the workers and the employers, as far as unions were concerned. Otherwise, there's no way of accounting for the great organizing campaigns that went on, the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations], the "march inland," and all that kind of stuff. No accounting for it without having that understanding, there was a big class knockdown battle. That doesn't mean

that every worker understood that there was a class battle. But basically that's what it was. The workers, for the most part, "won it," in quotes; they won that part of the battle, which made the change. That's what I think about it.

[00:49:35] **HOWARD:** Why do you think that the workers tending to see it more along the lines you're talking about than simply as another trade union struggle? The reason I'm asking is I've heard people say, "Well, hell, half the workers just got up and took it as a vacation and left, and then came back 90 days later."

[00:49:49] **ARCHIE:** I don't know. I don't understand it. I guess in every strike, no matter how serious the situation, some workers who are for the strike, eager to risk their ass, many. Man, those workers risk it. Here in San Francisco, from what I know, whom I've talk to, these people risked themselves. They went down to the picket line, knowing that they were going to club 'em in the goddamn head. The National Guard was there, and they showed up. Anybody that reads about or talks to somebody who was the Battle of Rincon Hill has to come to that conclusion. What the hell was the Battle of Rincon Hill? You've heard about that battle?

[00:50:40] **HOWARD:** Sure.

[00:50:41] **ARCHIE:** What the hell was that all about? Now that doesn't mean that 99 percent of all workers who struck were involved in the strike. I don't mean that. But I mean, there was enough of them so that they made an impact, and so that they scared the pants of the employers and the police and everybody else. Of course, the employers always make mistakes. They made some boobos. Boy they made some honeys. Real big mistakes.

[00:51:11] **HOWARD:** Like what, for example?

[00:51:12] **ARCHIE:** Well, they thought that terror would do it. They put forth the fact that there was terror, far and wide, to scare everybody and get 'em in line. Stuff like that. It had a reverse effect. They thought people wouldn't fight back; they were fighting back. Part of it had to do with the fact that the bottom of the crisis had been reached, and the economy was going up again. You needed people. People felt, well, son-of-a-bitches, try to get something.

[00:51:52] **HOWARD:** That's a good question you raise about terror because as we know in some cases repression works. Sometimes it doesn't. Why didn't it work this time? Was part of that the role of the party, being there to ideologically interpret and present an alternative program, or?

[00:52:08] **ARCHIE:** I think that's very true. I think that the party's role—not that the party didn't make a lot of mistakes of a sectarian nature—but, by and large, it did a job in respect to interpreting what was going on. That you could expect this kind of struggle, this kind of attack, and the way to overcome the attack is by more unity.

Don't give your names when you're first organizing a union. Learn how, when you're on a picket line, to organize so you can defend yourself. How to organize picket squads, picket captains of these squads, squad captains, responsible to a certain authority, so on and so forth. That they were able to carry on when necessary—well, they weren't able to do it all the time—when necessary they were able to carry on a physical battle with the scabs. Along came the police, so they had a problem with the police, too.

[00:53:24] **HOWARD:** That raises another question. I'm full of questions, you see. Was the leading role of the party, or the party's role in this thing basically because they were so technically competent at organizing and

conducting strikes? They knew strategy; they knew how to conduct a struggle. Or was it also because of their political leadership? I know sometimes it's difficult to pull them apart. What I'm suggesting is, if it had been a fascist organization that was technically competent at leading strikes, could they have played that same role?

[00:53:57] **ARCHIE:** Why should a fascist organization organize the workers in strike against the employers?

[00:54:02] **HOWARD:** Well, they wouldn't. Okay, let's take a liberal organization or something.

[00:54:04] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, that's correct. A liberal organization or even the old-timey AFL-CIO type of leadership. I don't think they could have won. What you needed was a realistic, hard-headed approach giving the workers the facts of life as far as the class struggle was concerned, particularly in those days.

You know, the Party would utilize a tactic, I don't think they discovered, but utilized very successfully. Even any small victory, even if it was the longshoremen in that strike, someplace else with a strike going on in the canneries that the workers hadn't won, that was put forth to the longshoremen, everybody. [banging sounds] Another victory. It can be done. They stuck together. They didn't permit themselves to be split by red-baiting. They didn't permit themselves to be split on account of nationality, race, color, or creed. They didn't allow themselves to be divided by being bribed. They all stuck together: unity, unity, unity. [sound of Archie slapping leg for emphasis] They pounded away at this unity. Workers learned that, and then they saw, "My God, it works. It works! No matter how tough it is, it works! We can win! We can bloody well win."

Like I say, the employers made some big booboos, particularly on the question of terror. They overreacted, as they say. They went and used guns and shot and killed people. This caused a terrific reaction. The goddamned Central Labor Council leadership couldn't stop the reaction that took place in San Francisco when they shot down these two workers, killed these two workers in cold blood. The next week, there was this huge demonstration of 100,000 people. It was a demonstration; that wasn't just a funeral! That was a demonstration! The workers stopped work. There was a general strike for so many hours, so many days. People said, "Enough, enough, enough!"

[00:56:39] **HOWARD:** What were your feelings during that general strike?

[00:56:40] **ARCHIE:** I was in jail.

[00:56:42] **HOWARD:** Oh, you were in jail during that, too, huh? Oh boy!

[00:56:45] **ARCHIE:** I heard about it and said, "Hooray!"

[00:56:48] **HOWARD:** What do you think was the feeling of the workers on the streets? Did they sense it as this is our revolution that we're making, or was it just, well, I hope we can win our union demands? Or something in between?

[00:56:58] **ARCHIE:** I think that everybody was elated and felt responsible and disciplined because, not only did they strike, but the union set up committees to run the town, if you please. To let so much food come in. Make sure the hospitals got their food and their supplies. To make sure that grocery stores got their supplies. To make sure there was no vandalism. During those few days of general strike, vandalism fell to 0 percent.

[00:57:34] **HOWARD:** That's what I heard.

[00:57:36] **ARCHIE:** [laughing]



[00:57:38] **HOWARD:** It's an incredible revolutionary action because it shows that capitalists are in fact dispensable. That they aren't necessary to run the society. I'm just wondering if workers got that same lesson from it or not.

[00:57:50] **ARCHIE:** Some did, and some did to more of an extent than others did and so on. The problem is always that after the action, the ruling IDs continue. The IDs of the ruling class continue. How do you stop them, really? Now, some of us, we're through with them. We've had our fill. But most people who never again go back to square one in regards to their minds being controlled by the media—they never again go back, but they are influenced to a large extent just the same. As the years go on, and if the labor movement doesn't carry on its active campaign against the employers and exposing them constantly, then the ruling IDs become more and more firm. So, I think that's what happened as time went on. For a number of years after that '34 Strike, there was a huge radicalism. A huge amount of radicalism in the United States, particularly in the area in California.

[00:59:21] **HOWARD:** Did that spill over into the post-'34 period of work stoppages and wildcat strikes?

[00:59:27] **ARCHIE:** Oh yes. Spilled over into organizing the unorganized. What the employers called "The March Inland." Are you acquainted with the march?

[00:59:36] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[00:59:37] **ARCHIE:** With the march inland. Unity between even the longshoremen with Teamsters and many other organizations began to develop. Of the CIO organization, you know about that. I forget who the person was, wrote a piece called, "Lord of the Docks." Don't know if you ever saw that.

[01:00:07] **HOWARD:** Sounds familiar.

[01:00:08] **ARCHIE:** "Lord of the Docks." I forget the guy's name. What he did is he posed the situation: the workers on those docks had come into their own, and they weren't going to let the employers dictate their live anymore. The workers felt that way about the longshoremen for years and years and years afterward, even after they didn't even deserve it. After a certain time, they no longer deserved it. They didn't play the same kind of a role. To this day, longshoremen are looked upon as an inspiration, and often they do certain things that renew that kind of a feeling. Like they refuse to ship armaments to Chile and El Salvador. That renews that feeling.

[01:01:23] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you a question about the '36-'37 period. I read a dissertation by a guy named [Richard] Alan Cushman who interviewed you way back when. San Francisco State student in 1970. The gist of what he interpreted from your remarks—and I guess he also interviewed Walter Stack—was that the Party played a very sort of constraining role on militancy during that period, and argued essentially that they tried to put the lid—

[END PART TWO/ BEGIN PART THREE]

[missing audio]

[01:01:53] **ARCHIE:** See, it's difficult to try to answer a question like that without giving it some thought. This is 1981. You referred to some interview in 1970. Remembering was easier, closer, whatever you want to call it. I have to stop and think awhile about that. One observation I would make is that certainly, as far as continuing

organizing the unorganized, to spread the March Inland, and so on, there was no damper put on that. I make a differentiation here.

We had, the Communist Party and our followers, on the waterfront had a dispute with a number of people and with—I'm trying to remember the organization. I'll come to that in a minute or so. But we had a dispute within the ranks on the role of continued wildcat strikes. Their value and to what extent they were helping to build the union and the labor movement, and to what extent they were helping to harm the movement. Now, we had the dispute, with the Party taking the position that one union, by itself, couldn't continually be able to win its demands by these type of wildcat strikes.

Now you have to know—a person has to know what happened, what we're talking about. We have to know what we're talking about. These wildcat strikes took the form ever since 1934, after the decision was made that—well, there was certain standards set. The union, so much wages, these were the conditions, and so on and so forth. But the workers never felt that the contract at that time, the settlement at that time, was sufficient. They never felt that. They always felt, "Well, we'll fix that." They proceeded to fix that because there were a number of comparatively small companies at the time, and they were able to force through certain working conditions that were very necessary and very beneficial to the man because each company was faced with the problem, whether they could stand a work stoppage while the other companies were working. See, we have to understand that. Well, there came a time when—I won't say that all of the possible demands were squeezed out of the employers—there came a time when the employers got themselves organized enough so that they were able to conduct more of a united campaign against the union, and particularly with the use of the newspapers about the lawlessness and the anarchism of the longshoremen. They had signed a contract, and here they were, carrying out these wildcat strikes. The union officials couldn't control them.

So that it got to the point where you had to make a decision. Like this: we want certain conditions. Contract runs out at a certain time. We strike by these conditions. We don't go back to work until these conditions are obtained. Whatever we sign, whatever contract we sign, so to speak, we agree to it—and, when in doubt, there's a democratic vote of men to adopt this contract—by and large, we have to stand by this contract.

[01:06:53] **HOWARD:** That's the crucial question, though, "by and large," isn't it?

[01:06:56] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, the crucial question is "by and large," but, you see, at that time, it wasn't "by and large." It was taken for granted that job action was a thing. We, the communists, helped to lead the job action until through 1936/37 strike. We helped to lead the job action. Then there came a time when the tactics had to change. You can't always use the same tactic. Suppose the employers unify themselves, make themselves stronger. Suppose they get help from other employers. Suppose they get help from the media or whatever. You can no longer do that, so you have to figure out a different tactic. I think that was the struggle that took place.

There was a group in the industry, I don't know—I'm trying to think back, if they were Trotskyites or who in the hell they were at the time—who accused the communists of selling out and becoming soft, blah blah blah. I do remember that this "great" leader, Harry Lundeberg. "Lunchbox," I used to call him. He so accused the longshoremen, particularly of not supporting the seamen, because the longshoremen had already gone out on strike. They had won a demand. Along came Lundeberg with demands. Whereas before, the seamen and longshoremen had jointly set a time for the strike, jointly been negotiating and so on, Lundeberg refused to do that. He waited until the longshoremen were finished, and then he said, "We're going to strike." Their demands were over and above what the longshoremen had received. The longshoremen said, well, "Nuts to that! If you strike now, you gotta help yourself, but don't think that we're going to support something like that."

So, we had that kind of a situation.

[01:09:11] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you a question if I can at this point. Play the devil's advocate. I just want to get your response to this. Some people—and I think Cushman draws this conclusion, most people do—that the reason the Party's line changed in '36 or '37 had less to do with what was going on here, than Soviet foreign policy, Comintern [Communist International organization] decisions, and things like that. Popular Front [a broad coalition] time. How would you respond to that?

[01:09:36] **ARCHIE:** '36-'37 Popular Front. . .

[01:09:39] **HOWARD:** It's a little late, actually. Popular Front is '35.

[01:09:47] **ARCHIE:** It ain't late. When was the Reichstag trial [relating to fire of the German parliament that allowed the Nazis to expel the communists] ?

[01:09:57] **HOWARD:** I don't remember, to tell you the truth.

[01:09:57] **ARCHIE:** Reichstag trial took place in '33. Communist International was advocating united front people starting at that time. Now I didn't see Cushman's written stuff.

[01:10:10] **HOWARD:** You didn't?

[01:10:11] **ARCHIE:** No, I never did. I never saw it. You see, that's one of the objections I have to these interviews, and that's why I have—I never! I never see this stuff.

[01:10:21] **HOWARD:** You should ask for it, when people conduct interviews. You really should. You're entitled to it.

[01:10:24] **ARCHIE:** Well, maybe you're right. Maybe that was my fault.

[01:10:29] **HOWARD:** Well, even aside from—that's his interpretation.

[01:10:31] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, that's his interpretation, but I'm not sure I know what he's saying.

[01:10:38] **HOWARD:** Okay, I'll tell you. The accusation's been made—it isn't just Cushman by any means. It's a lot of people that say, if you want to understand decisions that are made within the United States in the labor movement where the CP [Communist Party] is strong, you just look at the Soviet foreign policy. Every switch and turn that they engage in will be duplicated over here. That's a common—it particularly becomes relevant when we're talking about the war and things like that. But even at this earlier stage. Of course, that's always been the Trotskyite position.

[01:11:05] **ARCHIE:** Well, you know, my experience is that those of us who were active in the Communist Party, on a national scale, let alone a worldwide scale, or rather just keeping it to a national scale, come to a convention and we relate our experiences. We say, "Nationwide, these are the experiences we've had. This is how people are responding. This is what people are doing. Here is where we're failing; here's where we're gaining. This is what it looks like." We come to a conclusion that wildcat strikes, at least in the waterfront industry, are from nowhere anymore. I don't know why we can't come to that conclusion. What the hell it's got to do with—

[01:12:05] **HOWARD:** No, you certainly can.

[01:12:07] **ARCHIE:** Yeah. What the hell's it got to do with what's happening in the Comintern?

Or, wait a minute. Suppose we have always advocated internationalism, working class internationalism. I still think that one of the highest examples of working class internationalism is a working class international organization, like an International Communist Party that's internationally organized. And is able to direct its force at any one time against the main enemy, whether it's imperialism here or whatever danger of war or whatever. I think that's the greatest form of working class internationalism. I don't know a higher form. Beats the life out of me, a higher form.

They, too, the Comintern, has a convention. They have reports. Now, some organizations are more bureaucratic than others, I ain't gonna deny that. I don't know exactly what they allowed—I wasn't at any of these conferences. I presume that there was a report by so-and-so from the United States, so-and-so from Romania, so-and-so from Italy, so-and-so from France, so-and-so from England, blah blah blah. And so forth. They came to certain conclusions, including the fact that there's a rise of the danger of fascism, and in order to counteract the danger of fascism we have to have a development of the popular front. Or, what did you say before? What term did you use before?

[01:13:50] **HOWARD:** That was really what I used.

[01:13:51] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, alright. The Communist Party in the United States says, I will examine—yes, we agree to that. Just exactly what the hell that has to do—I don't mean it just that sharp, but I can't really interpret what the hell the Popular Front is reflected in not having wildcat strikes anymore. I don't understand that.

[01:14:24] **HOWARD:** Well, I can tell you what, the argument's been made. I'm sympathetic to what you're talking about. What they'll say is, the question here is accountability. As a leader, or someone who's in a leadership capacity of a trade union, are you accountable to the interests of the rank and file or to an international Communist movement? Now, in your mind, the two may overlap. But in many workers' [minds], of course, they don't see it that way. They want their bread-and-butter now.

[01:14:52] **ARCHIE:** And, among organizations who are anti-Communist, they use that as a point of difference. Yes.

[01:14:58] **HOWARD:** Right.

[01:14:59] **ARCHIE:** Certainly, I understand that. Even though they're not necessarily right about it.

[01:15:03] **HOWARD:** Well, even if they're—you could be a Communist and still take that analysis and say it was correct. It could still be a correct analysis, right? I mean, a lot of anti-Communists use the argument to attack the left. What I'm asking you, is it correct? Is it 1936, when you start to lay off on pushing the wildcats, what's the reason for that? You've suggested that it had more to do with conditions in the industry, that the employers were better organized, that you would have lost public support, that you really gained all that you could reasonably expect to gain up to that point.

[01:15:33] **ARCHIE:** From wildcat strikes, right.

[01:15:34] **HOWARD:** Okay, so you're looking into the industry and explaining why you laid off on wildcats.

[01:15:39] **ARCHIE:** Mm-hmm.

[01:15:39] **HOWARD:** The alternative explanation, the most popular one, unfortunately, is that it had little to do with that, and it was really a reflection of the Comintern. That is was now the rise of fascism that we had to worry about, and we had to lay off the class struggle. Now both of them may have been operating at the same time. I just want—

[01:16:01] **ARCHIE:** I think it's a fallacy. I think that argument is a fallacy. That we laid off because the Comintern said "We gotta stop the class struggle."

[01:16:10] **HOWARD:** You don't put any credence in that, then.

[01:16:15] **ARCHIE:** You know, if you—the answer to what you just said is no. For that period of time, I don't put any credence into it. I don't know how—what's his name, who took the—

[01:16:27] **HOWARD:** Cushman's just one, but there's a bunch that make that argument.

[01:16:30] **ARCHIE:** Why he got that from me beats me.

[01:16:32] **HOWARD:** I know, this was—

[01:16:34] **ARCHIE:** That beats me.

[01:16:35] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[01:16:36] **ARCHIE:** That I would say in 1970 that the Communist International is why we slowed down on wildcat strikes? I don't believe that.

[01:16:48] **HOWARD:** He may not have taken it from you. He used you and Walter Stack as his main source of evidence, and then he also went through the CP magazines of the time and tried to build a case that that was what was going on.

[01:16:58] **ARCHIE:** I never saw that stuff.

[01:17:01] **HOWARD:** You should take a look at it. You're—right. Okay.

[pause in recording]

[01:17:10] **ARCHIE:** I'm trying to remember who were the people—and I criticize myself for trying to remember in my head instead of writing it down on a piece of paper and making notes of it—who were the people that I talked to and had interviews through all this time. Because in relation to the question we're talking about, the one era where I might have and probably did speak to the what happened in the United States, this or this foreign policy by the Soviet Union or anybody else, was during the [Earl] Browder period, when we came to the conclusion to dissolve the Communist Party or change it to the—what the hell did we call it?

[01:18:09] **HOWARD:** The Communist Political Association.

[01:18:10] **ARCHIE:** Right, and the class struggle was out of the window, so to speak, and furthermore the Negro question, the Black question we called it, has been resolved. The Black people, the majority, no longer

want or care about self-determination.<sup>2</sup> Browder and his bunch decided all of a sudden. I was one of the few people who objected to that and voted against it.

[01:18:42] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[01:18:43] **ARCHIE:** That's correct.

[01:18:44] **HOWARD:** What was your capacity in the Party at that time?

[01:18:48] **ARCHIE:** I was a member—was I a member of the national committee at that time? I think I was a member of the national committee.

[01:18:54] **HOWARD:** How many people are on the national committee?

[01:18:55] **ARCHIE:** Now? Then? I don't know. There might have been 100 at that time.

[01:19:00] **HOWARD:** How many people joined you in dissenting against that? [Archie holds up one finger.]

Are you serious? One. He said one.

[01:19:06] **ARCHIE:** I'm serious. That's me.

[01:19:07] **HOWARD:** You were the only one?

[01:19:08] **ARCHIE:** Yes. Now, whoever else dissented, never made it public. I understand that William Z. Foster did later.

[01:19:17] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[01:19:18] **ARCHIE:** But he had a better understanding and better discipline than Brown did. As a matter of fact, if you ask me how many joined me, I'm sorry, I'm making a mistake. Because I would not go to the National Convention as a delegate from California, though they wanted me to. They said to me, "Why don't you go there and speak your opposition?" I said, you see, we had a system at the time where you got elected from these huge clubs that we had. Huge, large clubs. You got elected from the club, and my club had endorsed Browder's position. So I said, "How can I go as a delegate from that club? That ain't the club position. I would be misrepresenting the club. What are you talking about?" So I didn't go. Whatever the argument was, I just didn't go.

But here in the state, when it came to the vote in the state, I voted against it. There were a few others. So I never went to the National Convention, so I really don't know who voted at the National Convention and which way they voted. I really don't know.

Now, I'm of the opinion that Browder's leadership just misinterpreted the whole bloody business about what was meant by joining in the war effort, united war effort. Dissolve the party? That didn't call for dissolving the party. Class struggle didn't stop. We had to make our different tactics, and the party was certainly in favor of the war effort, no question about that. But changing to the Communist Political Association meant to me and to

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<sup>2</sup> Until 1935, the Communist Party held the position that Black Americans in the Southern US constituted an oppressed nation and advocated for their right to vote on self-determination (known as the "Black Belt" theory).

many others that this was saying that the class struggle did not exist, really, or at least it was toned down, and we could proceed with the liberal bourgeoisie.

[01:21:43] **HOWARD:** In fact, Browder said so much—

[01:21:44] **ARCHIE:** That's right.

[01:21:45] **HOWARD:** —in so many words.

[01:21:45] **ARCHIE:** That's right, and I said "I just don't agree with that."

Now, I'll give you an example of what happened and positions that the party took specifically. [sound of a dog's collar jingling while scratching] The war started, and up and down the coast in San Francisco, among the longshore, we had a limit to the sling load size. Do you know what that means?

[01:22:16] **HOWARD:** 2100 pounds.

[01:22:18] **ARCHIE:** 2100 pounds, right. We had an arbitrator here from the War Labor Board, whatever it was called at the time, and I'm trying to think of his name.

[01:22:35] **HOWARD:** Was it [?Morris?] ?

[01:22:36] **ARCHIE:** No, not Morris. From Stanford. Started with a C. Anyway, he made the decision that the loading—we were loading cement in bags—was going to be 2400 pounds, or 2500. I forget which. At which point, we said "Nothing doing." I argued—

[01:23:02] **HOWARD:** "We" being who?

[01:23:05] **ARCHIE:** The Party. The Party split on it. I'll tell you about that. Some people split on it. But Bridges said "No." I said "Nothing doing."

[01:23:15] **HOWARD:** Are you sure that's what Bridges said?

[01:23:16] **ARCHIE:** Of course! I'm right there! I'm sitting in the meeting. Yes, Bridges was against raiding the load.

[01:23:23] **HOWARD:** Because I remember reading somewhere where he went to Los Angeles and suggested raising the sling limits. Maybe that was later on.

[01:23:28] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, because they had 1800 pounds.

[01:23:31] **HOWARD:** In L.A.?

[01:23:32] **ARCHIE:** Yes.

[01:23:32] **HOWARD:** You sure?

[01:23:33] **ARCHIE:** Yes, I'm sure.

[01:23:34] **HOWARD:** I thought it was a coastwise agreement on those sling load limits.

[01:23:36] **ARCHIE:** Well, finally we got 2,100 pounds. But they had 1,800.

[01:23:41] **HOWARD:** Well, still, okay. I guess it's still a question of whether a left leader should be pushing an increase in sling load limits, even if it was only 18 [hundred] . I don't know.

[01:23:51] **ARCHIE:** The coast agreement was 2,100. Some were 2,500; some were 2,700; some was 1,800; some was 2,100. So let's all get together and decide what it shall be. It'll be better for the whole coast, and we settled on 2,100 pounds, except Los Angeles wouldn't go along with it. "We got 1,800! The hell with you!"

[01:24:09] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[01:24:10] **ARCHIE:** That's correct. Absolutely correct.

[01:24:17] **HOWARD:** You were going to tell me about the sling load limits.

[01:24:19] **ARCHIE:** I'm going there. I'm going to go there. The War Labor Board guy—the hell's his name? Starts with a C.—he made the decision for 2400, 2500. Bridges told him at the meeting, "We're not going to do it. We're not going to do it." And I spoke against it. Now, this didn't happen at the union meeting; it happened later on. Where people like—what's his name, that you asked about before? That tall guy, what the hell is his name? [sound of tapping while thinking]

[01:24:53] **HOWARD:** Schomaker?

[01:24:54] **ARCHIE:** Schomaker. He says, "Christ's sake, that's what Browder means when he says support the war effort. We gotta raise the sling load." We said, "That ain't what Browder means." Of course, that's what Browder really meant. At that time, I couldn't dream that that was the case. But here on the San Francisco waterfront, we said, "It's not going to impede the war effort if we keep the sling load to 2100 pounds. The hell you guys talking about? 2400 pounds is not going to increase the ability to fight Hitler and those people. What are you talking about? What you guys are trying to do is using the war to break down our conditions. You're not going to get away with it." That's what we told the employers.

So, I'm just giving you that example of the fight in regards to Browder, and how it was used here in the United States by certain party leaders, particularly Browder and others—a whole bunch at that time—to give up our conditions and to give up our vital positions in regards to the class struggle. That didn't only pertain just to the war, but even after the war. That's why we had that big split. That's what took place after '48.

[01:26:13] **HOWARD:** Yeah, a little earlier than that.

Are you suggesting that in the longshore industry, at least, the policy of class collaboration didn't go as far as it did elsewhere?

Or, let me rephrase the question. Let me say, did the policy of class collaboration get introduced into the longshore industry in any way? Was there—

[01:26:40] **ARCHIE:** I would say there was, sure. We didn't have the same militancy—that's the wrong word—the same height of the struggle against the employers at the time. We were, the communists were very interested in seeing to it that the ships sailed, that the stuff got to the Soviet Union, for example. We were very



perturbed when we saw the kind of treatment that the various employer companies were giving to Soviet ships. Not so much Soviet ships. The loading and the handling of cargo to be sent to the Soviet Union—they just rooked the Soviet Union. We were very perturbed about that. Of all places, see, just like in all the war industries. You know the story about ship building. So they hired 10 million people; they didn't have use for them, so you pretend to be busy, and so on and so forth. It was funny; among the longshoremen, among the waterfront here in San Francisco, the employers were telling us take it easy. Because it's cost plus 10 percent, and, the more they hired, the more money they made.

[01:28:04] **HOWARD:** Were you working on the docks in the war?

[01:28:06] **ARCHIE:** Yes, I was working on the docks.

[01:28:07] **HOWARD:** Why didn't you volunteer?

[01:28:08] **ARCHIE:** I did.

[01:28:09] **HOWARD:** You did?

[01:28:10] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yes, I did. I volunteered on the anniversary of Pearl Harbor, 1942. They turned me down because I was a premature anti-fascist.

[01:28:23] **HOWARD:** I heard about that.

[01:28:23] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, see? So I had to sneak around them and go and report to my local draft board. These jerks didn't know what I was doing. I volunteered. She said, "You're exempt." You know, I had all kinds of exemptions. I'm a defense worker; I got two kids; I'm married. "Your wife is going to have to sign this." I says, "Alright," and my wife signed it. That's how I got in. See, they had refused me, and, then when I got through the regular draft, they sent me through the machinery. It took some time. I finally got into the ETO [European Theater of Operations] . I fought.

[01:29:13] **HOWARD:** Oh, you did?

[01:29:14] **ARCHIE:** You're goddamn right, I fought. I fought in France and Germany and Belgium. Oh yes, with the 76th Infantry.

[01:29:20] **HOWARD:** And they never caught you as being a premature anti-fascist?

[01:29:23] **ARCHIE:** Well, yes. All the way through. They would never permit—whenever the captain would put in for promotion for me, there was the W2 there, "Don't promote this guy." I never got promoted above PFC [private first class] . Captain put in me for corporal couple of times. [makes spitting sound like deflating balloon] Never happened.

[01:29:42] **HOWARD:** So you were here at least from December '42? Something like that?

[01:29:46] **ARCHIE:** I was here, oh yes, beyond that. I didn't make the grade until—let's see. I was overseas 18 months. So, actually I didn't make until about the end of '43.

[01:30:03] **HOWARD:** Oh, okay. So you were here for much of the war.

[01:30:07] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yes, I was here for a considerable part of the war. They wouldn't let me go.

[01:30:10] **HOWARD:** What can you tell me about speed-up, during the war, if there was such a thing? Productivity?

[01:30:18] **ARCHIE:** We had a fight with the employers. We were trying to increase productivity. That was the Communist Party's position.

[01:30:26] **HOWARD:** In retrospect, what do you think of that position?

[01:30:28] **ARCHIE:** I think it was a good position. You see, it wasn't a question of real speed-up and working harder. The real question was that these guys were sabotaging. The employers were sabotaging. That's what we were fighting. We weren't fighting that the guys should work that much harder and that much longer. See, we had ten-hour days anyway. Before the goddamn war started. So we had ten-hour days during the war. Well, we had ten and twelve because, if the ship was going sail, they had twelve hours. It was the same number of hours. Like I tell you, what happened was is that they would have a whole bunch of men just standing by, telling them to look busy. That's what we fought against. Not about the guys to work harder, though they did that, too. We did that also. So, the main thing was to fight the employers' sabotage.

[01:31:28] **HOWARD:** But that did involve working harder though, that's what I'm getting at. It involved also squeezing productivity out of the workers.

[01:31:34] **ARCHIE:** I didn't squeeze anyone. Alright, alright. You can give it any name that you want. What we were talking about is that the war was on, and we needed to—opposition was rabid, and we needed to win the war and keep this going. The main struggle was not too make the men work harder, to squeeze more productivity. The main struggle was against the employers' sabotage.

[01:32:04] **HOWARD:** Okay, and that took the form of not having idle gangs hanging around and things like that, or being inefficient in loading. Opposing those sorts of things, right?

[01:32:12] **ARCHIE:** That's right, and complaining about it and, on occasion, confronting the employer with it. Particularly on the Soviet ships. Oh, we had some razzle—

[END PART THREE/BEGIN PART FOUR]

[missing audio]

—so it was that kind of struggle.

We had people in the shipyards, I remember. I'll never forget this one guy. [murmur of voices from another room] He said, "I went to my foreman, and I said, 'What am I supposed to do? I've been here a week, and I ain't done a tap of work.' He says, 'Just look busy.'" Whole bloody week. That's the kind of stuff we fought against.

[01:33:12] **HOWARD:** Okay, then, what can you tell me about work stoppages during the war? Were there any, and if there were, what were the issues involved? I understand that there were at least 35 in San Francisco alone during the period of the war. My recollection is that some of those had to do with working alongside non-union men, things like that. The reason I'm asking, of course, is to get a sense of what the ranks felt about these policies.

[01:33:50] **ARCHIE:** [pause while thinking] You've got a record of 35 work stoppages in San Francisco?

[01:33:53] **HOWARD:** I believe so. Or disputes. I'm sure that they took some form like that.

[01:34:01] **ARCHIE:** I told you about the cement stuff.

[01:34:03] **HOWARD:** Yeah. Did that actually eventually end in a work stoppage?

[01:34:07] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yes. That's what we did.

[01:34:10] **HOWARD:** So they ordered you to do it. Longshoremen of San Francisco refused.

[01:34:14] **ARCHIE:** Mm-hmm. Oh, we refused, oh yes.

[01:34:16] **HOWARD:** Then it went to arbitration.

[01:34:18] **ARCHIE:** Well, this guy came down with 2500 pounds or 2400 pounds. We said we're not accepting it, period. And so we went back to 2100.

[01:34:28] **HOWARD:** And Bridges advocated the 2100?

[01:34:31] **ARCHIE:** Bridges was right there. [pounds table for emphasis]

[01:34:34] **HOWARD:** I'm sure you've read some of the quotes that he came out with during the war about, "Unions have to become instruments of speed-up. No longer should they be protecting the worker's interest. The employers are no longer our enemy." He sounded a lot like Browder.

[01:34:45] **ARCHIE:** 1943, I went into the Army. Some of those statements you're referring to could have been made during that time. I don't remember. I really don't remember. I think that the Browder influence raised a lot of havoc among militants and left wing leaders, including Bridges. I have no question about that whatsoever. No question about that whatsoever.

I also—

[01:35:24] **HOWARD:** Can I stop you there? When you say "raised a lot of havoc," earlier you told me that it was defensible, all the positions that were taken during the war.

[01:35:30] **ARCHIE:** Say that again?

[01:35:32] **HOWARD:** Earlier you said that it was correct, the Party's position during the war, didn't you?

[01:35:35] **ARCHIE:** Yes, the Party's position during the war was correct. I still say so, yeah.

[01:35:40] **HOWARD:** Then what was wrong with Browder?

[01:35:41] **ARCHIE:** He didn't have to give up the Party.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> During World War II, Earl Browder predicted that the alliance between the US and Soviet Union would continue into the postwar period, and the Popular Front would be a permanent strategy. In 1944, the Communist Party (CPUSA) was officially

[01:35:46] **HOWARD:** Just that?

[01:35:47] **ARCHIE:** Wait a minute. You didn't have to give up the Party. It wasn't true that there was no longer any problem between the employers and the unions and the workers. Not true that what we had to do, the Party's position was, correct for the Party's position was, that some of the disputes, some of the problems, would have to wait until after the war to resolve. That part is true. But that the question of the unions and the working class giving leadership in the struggle—see, for an example, take the question of war. The war was a war against fascism. [voices from another room] You have to make certain sacrifices to fight the goddamn fascists. Like, for an example, I went into the Army. Even if they didn't want me, I went into the Army. That was a “sacrifice,” right? So the workers on the job also had to make certain sacrifices.

[01:37:17] **HOWARD:** Were they prepared to make those sacrifices? I guess that's what I'm asking when I ask you about the number of work stoppages.

[01:37:24] **ARCHIE:** See, I think the workers by and large supported the war. I think the workers in supporting the war were agreed to, whatever you want to call it, working harder, working more efficiently, trying to stop the employers' sabotage. I'll tell you, the Trotskyites make a “case” that the war was not a people's war; that the war was basically a war to strengthen and enrich imperialism. That's the problem.

[01:38:21] **HOWARD:** Even if we agree that it was an anti-fascist people's war—

[01:38:24] **ARCHIE:** Yes?

[01:38:24] **HOWARD:** —then the question still becomes was it correct to sacrifice working conditions in order to prosecute the war. I mean, the question is—obviously people had to get behind the national effort. The question is did they go overboard? The UE [United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America] in some cases went overboard. That's my reading of the situation. They were literally expelling members of their union who engaged in work stoppages during the war. The UE sent telegrams to FDR saying that John L. Lewis should be locked up, that he was a criminal and a traitor for leading strikes among the miners. That's pretty strong stuff coming from the left.

[interruption]

[01:39:01] **ARCHIE:** You want a hot fudge sundae?

[01:39:02] **HOWARD:** No, thanks. Thanks anyway. Sounds tempting.

[01:39:05] **ARCHIE:** Throw it down the sink if you don't want it.

[01:39:10] **HOWARD:** See, we're talking about degrees. It's never black and white. That's what I'm saying.

[01:39:19] **ARCHIE:** I am not going to pass judgment on UE. If you want my opinion, UE, next to or alongside the longshoremen, has been one of the most valiant, strongest working class unions here in the United States.

[01:39:35] **HOWARD:** I agree.

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dissolved, and the Communist Political Association (CPA) was launched to be a left-wing force within the Democratic Party. In July 1945, the CPA dissolved itself and reestablished CPUSA; Browder was expelled.

[01:39:38] **ARCHIE:** I don't know what led them to take the position that they did. I know that Browder's position was wrong because it would lead to the kind of stuff that you're talking about.

[01:39:51] **HOWARD:** But you don't think it did lead to it? Or what?

[01:39:54] **ARCHIE:** Course it did. It did! Oh, yes. Of course it did.

[01:39:59] **HOWARD:** I'm getting confused. I can't follow your position on this, to tell you the truth.

[01:40:03] **ARCHIE:** Alright. My position is that the war was an anti-fascist war. It called for organizing every bit of strength and effort to win the war, no question about it. To win the war required the participation of the workers. And the participation had to do with having input. That was the problem. Where's the input on the part of the workers? Even if they decide jointly, well, we're going to work harder—let's say they decided to work harder in order to get a certain thing done. I am sure that when the NMU [National Maritime Union] people—here on the West Coast, too, but particularly the NMU people—would sail the ships to Murmansk [Russia], that was a rough job. I'll bet you that the watches were longer than the four hour watches that they got now. Should we be in favor or against longer watches to get to Murmansk? It's ridiculous. Well, I'm in favor of it. The workers had input in that. The NMU workers decided, particularly those who got on the run to Murmansk—nobody forced them. Nobody forced them. Nobody forced the NMU workers to go on a run to Murmansk. Mostly volunteers, "I want to go on that. I want to get this ship out." They decided to get the ship to Murmansk.

[01:41:43] **HOWARD:** Okay, I'm glad you brought up the NMU because that leads into the next set of issues. One explanation of the purge of the left wing in the CIO after the war was that they became closely identified with these various left—I guess there were eleven CIO unions that were expelled.

[01:41:58] **ARCHIE:** Yes, eleven.

[01:41:59] **HOWARD:** In the eleven unions that they had organizational input, they became so identified with the class collaboration policies during the war that they lost credibility after the war. So that rival organizations like the IUE [International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers] could challenge the UE and accuse the left of not pushing and not being militant. Certainly [Joseph] Curran attacked the left on those grounds and argued that they weren't militant, that the CP had sold out the workers' interest. I understand even in the longshore industry there were some people like [James] Kearney who had opposed a lot of the class collaboration during the war, and those guys became officials in the union after the war. Which would seem to indicate that at least there was some groundswell of discontent with the position of the left in these unions.

[01:42:43] **ARCHIE:** Let me respond to that. I said that Browder's position did damage. I said that. I tried to indicate what the damage was. The damage was to take away the workers' right to control their lives, to control their unions, and to fight for as much input as possible in the war effort under workers' leadership. You understand what I'm talking about? Against Browder's position to dissolve the Communist Party as such.

Now, having said that, you gave me some examples of people who claimed that the Communist Party had become opportunist, right?

[01:43:45] **HOWARD:** I'm not sure you want to call—

[01:43:45] **ARCHIE:** No, they said that, and maybe with some merit. I'm not saying without merit. I'm getting to the point. Curran is a fine example. Oh brother, look at that! Look at what happened to Curran. Ran away with a million dollars from the workers' money. Sold out the NMU right down the line as much as he possibly could.

[01:44:10] **HOWARD:** Not in the early period, though, right? Before the fifties. '48-'50, that period.

[01:44:15] **ARCHIE:** The communists were in on that. The communists built up Curran; they bought him his first suit.

[01:44:21] **HOWARD:** Precisely, right.

[01:44:23] **ARCHIE:** He followed policies [?Jordan?] had worked out. What's the point?

[01:44:26] **HOWARD:** And when he turned against the Party in the NMU, he was joined mostly by ex-Party people.

[01:44:33] **ARCHIE:** Like? I don't know who you're talking—maybe.

[01:44:35] **HOWARD:** I don't know—it was Jack Lawrence and people like that, who took an anti-Browder position and I understand were expelled from the Party because of that, and then later went and joined with Curran to denounce the party regulars for class collaboration during the war. Then they were retained in office—the CP, [Frederick] “Blackie” Myers, people like that, were simply removed.

[01:44:57] **ARCHIE:** Blackie Myers and those people removed not because—although it's true, could be, that they followed an opportunist-about-Browder line in the NMU during that period—but Blackie Myers lost out because of a virulent anti-communist program that didn't say that they weren't tough enough during the war, but they were a danger to goddamn country. They're Soviet agents, is what they are.

[01:45:32] **HOWARD:** I don't know. Where do you get that reading?

[01:45:34] **ARCHIE:** Where do I get that reading? The material that was issued at the time.

[01:45:38] **HOWARD:** Well, I've seen a lot of secondary materials where Curran's writing back and forth in *The Pilot*, which was their [NMU] newspaper.

[01:45:44] **ARCHIE:** Yes.

[01:45:44] **HOWARD:** The basis of his attack is mostly that these communists are not good trade unionists, that they sold us out during the war. You can't trust them for that reason. He didn't do the blatant red-baiting.

[01:45:53] **ARCHIE:** When did that come about? When did the red-baiting come about? Do you remember?

[01:45:56] **HOWARD:** That's much later, after he's kicked the CP out and they don't have a voice any longer. Then he begins red-baiting. Then he moves way to the right and gets into all the stuff of expelling people from the unions and stuff like that.

[01:46:05] **ARCHIE:** He had good tactics, didn't he? Lundeberg did the same. Very good tactics.

[01:46:10] **HOWARD:** And the UE followed a similar course. Several of the struggles in the larger locals—you had the IUE, the right wing force, accusing the UE of not being militant enough during the war. I don't know if—

[01:46:23] **ARCHIE:** You got some of that stuff on the UE and what the IUE—

[01:46:27] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[01:46:29] **ARCHIE:** They accused the UE of —

[01:46:34] **HOWARD:** Opportunism during the war.

Now, certainly in the UAW [United Automobile Workers] it's clear, right? Where you have a strong left wing faction, communists playing a very viable role there—they're the ones that are pushing piece rates and everything else. After the war, [Walter] Reuther deliberately turns that against them and say these are the guys that tried to sell that shit to you before. You're not going to support them anymore. He had no trouble kicking them out.

[01:46:59] **ARCHIE:** I don't understand something. As far as John L. Lewis is concerned, you can understand that. John L. Lewis took a stand, right? He was threatened by the government and stuff like that. What the hell was Reuther's position during the war? He went along with it.

[01:47:20] **HOWARD:** He didn't go quite as far as the CP did in the union, but he went along generally with it. He played a moderate course. I understand the Trots [Trotskyists] were saying "No collaboration," which was unrealistic. The CP was way over here saying "Let's have piece rates," and Reuther was somewhere in the middle. I think his position was let's have piece rates on war production only. So he was an opportunist clearly. I'm not defending Reuther's stance, but I'm saying—

[01:47:43] **ARCHIE:** No, no, you're not but I just don't understand. I have a different reading of what happened. As far as eleven unions being kicked out of the CIO. Eleven unions kicked out of the CIO because they were pro-communist. They wouldn't support Truman, and that proved that they were pro-communist. Philip Murray was the header-upper of the people who organized the anti-communist drive to kick these unions out. That's my reading.

[01:48:20] **HOWARD:** No, I agree. That's true, but I'm talking about internal factionalism within each union. The UAW, for instance, was never expelled from the CIO. The NMU never had to go through an expulsion.

[01:48:31] **ARCHIE:** UAW people came out here to San Francisco. I was at the meeting. [Wyndham] Mortimer—not Mortimer. What the hell was that big guy's name?

[01:48:46] **HOWARD:** [Richard] Frankenstein?

[01:48:47] **ARCHIE:** No, was it Frankenstein? A big guy. . .

[01:48:49] **HOWARD:** Frankenstein was a big guy.

[01:48:50] **ARCHIE:** Maybe it was Frankenstein. A header-upper. Two came out here, just before they kicked out the eleven unions. He came out here to get the longshoremen to vote against Bridges here in San Francisco. I was at the meeting! I heard what they said, and I heard what Bridges said. Bridges said, "Hey, during the

you're your goddamn right we fought to win the war. What the hell was wrong with that?" It's a good question, to workers generally. I'm not talking about class-conscious people, but the workers generally. What the hell was wrong with trying to win a war?

[01:49:27] **HOWARD:** Well, my response would be there's nothing wrong with that, provided you don't go overboard. Always a question of whether the Party went too far overboard on its class collaboration.

[01:49:37] **ARCHIE:** And therefore should be kicked out of the CIO?

[01:49:39] **HOWARD:** No, no, I'm not, see—

[01:49:41] **ARCHIE:** Hey, you raise—excuse me, Howard—

[01:49:43] **HOWARD:** I'm looking at—

[01:49:43] **ARCHIE:** You raise certain questions. You'll excuse me if I answer and talk the way that I do. Because you're a devil's advocate—that's fine. So I have to talk to you as a devil's advocate.

[01:49:57] **HOWARD:** No, see, okay, let me say this, though. The reason I'm raising this is not because I'm trying to justify whether it was correct to expel the communists. I obviously don't think that was correct.

[01:50:06] **ARCHIE:** Then what?

[01:50:06] **HOWARD:** We're both looking at the same question: what happened to working class consciousness in the fifties? The CP was a viable force—

[01:50:13] **ARCHIE:** Now we're on another question. What happened to working class consciousness in the fifties?

[01:50:15] **HOWARD:** That's the reason I'm asking this question. That's the only reason it's interesting to me.

[01:50:19] **ARCHIE:** What happened—

[01:50:20] **HOWARD:** What happened to the left in the labor movement in the fifties?

[01:50:22] **ARCHIE:** What happened to the left in the labor movement in the fifties. Your contention's the Party destroyed it.

[01:50:28] **HOWARD:** I'm not coming out quite that way, but I'm saying that they played a role in their own demise.

[01:50:32] **ARCHIE:** You're being a devil's advocate and saying, with the Trotskyites and the others, the Party destroyed class consciousness in the workers. That's what you're saying.

[01:50:39] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I'm raising that as a question, I guess, yeah.

[01:50:41] **ARCHIE:** Right? Right? Let's put things like they are, not have any fuzziness. I can answer the question. I can handle it. I'm the guy that fought Browder from the goddamn beginning. Let's get that clear.



[01:50:52] **HOWARD:** Okay

[01:50:53] **ARCHIE:** That's who you're talking to. You're not talking to somebody that supported Browder's position, any way, shape, or form. So, I think that the fact that, after the war, I for one—many of the Party people and many on the left were of the opinion that capitalism was really going to have a bad time, particularly American capitalism. Hey, we were wrong, weren't we? The left was wrong about that. Not just the communists. Let's get that clear. But capitalism recovered precisely because the great destruction in the world, and the fact that nothing was destroyed here in the United States but quite the contrary. They could utilize the resources they had to rebuild and rescue the capitalist countries in other parts of the world.

When jobs continue, and when the patriotic war propaganda—whoever was right or wrong about that—the patriotic war propaganda certainly had its effect upon the American workers, they went the route that Truman and Philip Murray and these guys, the head of the UAW people, were advocating. Contrary to what the party and the left unions were thinking.

I'll talk to the question of class consciousness in the fifties. What happened to class consciousness? It's not something up here in the sky. It's a specific thing that you have to examine. The situation in the fifties was different than it was in the thirties and early-forties. What was the difference? The militancy among the working class in the thirties and forties was on the rise. Not true in the fifties. Why? Because they didn't have the same problems. As a matter of fact, many more workers were going to work.

[01:53:15] **HOWARD:** Yeah. If we pose the question a little differently, though, why was it so easy to ease the communists out of the labor movement? Or, put it this way, ease them out of unions in which they had a strong control?

[01:53:26] **ARCHIE:** Alright now, stop. Please stop. It has to do with the question raised before. What happened to class consciousness? How do you explain class consciousness? What, does it come from the sky? It comes from the experience of the workers.

[01:53:47] **HOWARD:** Precisely.

[01:53:48] **ARCHIE:** And the participation of the leading class organization like a Communist Party. Now it's obvious that during the war, and maybe a couple years after—I don't know for how long a period—the Communist Party was not doing the kind of job it did in building class consciousness before the war. That's obvious. But that is not the whole answer. Then we go back. So why didn't they continue the class consciousness during the war? Because it was necessary to defeat fascism. The greatest revolutionary task was to defeat fascism.

[01:54:31] **HOWARD:** Okay, see, I agree. If I was in that position, I would have done the same thing. It's not a question of whether it was a good or bad decision.

[01:54:36] **ARCHIE:** Then what are we talking about?

[01:54:37] **HOWARD:** What we're talking about is whether that decision, good or bad—let's assume it was the correct one to make—whether it had an impact on the ability of the right-wing forces in the CIO to expel the left. That's what we're talking about. See, I've often argued—I've been at seminars and I've taken that exact same position. If I were in 1940-41, I would have been pushing the same thing. Then the question comes back to me: well, that isn't the issue any longer. It's not a question of right or wrong.

[01:55:05] **ARCHIE:** Then what's the issue?

[01:55:06] **HOWARD:** The question is: did pushing that line compromise the ability or undermine the credibility of the left after the war? So that they could no longer say—like they did in the thirties and said, “Look, we were the ones that build these unions. We were militant; we’ve been principled; we’ve never sold out to the employers. You can have faith in us. You can follow our leadership.” They couldn’t say that anymore by the nineteen-fifties.

[01:55:26] **ARCHIE:** Well, I don’t agree with you on that, but let’s say that part is true. I don’t agree with you. It isn’t all black and white like that.

[01:55:32] **HOWARD:** I agree. I’m just trying to paint the contrast.

[01:55:36] **ARCHIE:** You see, it’s seemed astounding to me that the workers—I won’t talk about the NMU. The NMU, ILWU, and maybe even the UE to some extent. I will talk about the United Auto Workers. I will talk about the mine workers, even the mine workers [United Mine Workers of America] . I will talk about the oil, chemical workers [Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union] . Steel workers, I will talk about the steelworkers [United Steelworkers] . The reason the communists and the left was pushed out of the unions was because the union leadership could point and say, “The communists sold you out during the war.” Because I think the vast majority of the workers in those unions believed in the war effort. That’s what I think.

[01:56:37] **HOWARD:** Okay, then, if we stop right there, then I have to say, how do you explain the ability of Curran to expel—to vote them out, have the rank and file vote out the communists in his union? The same guys who had built the damn union and put Curran where he was. As you said, bought his first suit for him. How was he able to do that?

[01:56:54] **ARCHIE:** I said what? Oh bought his first suit, yeah, yeah. Well, I’ll tell you, see as far as the NMU is concerned, there was a different situation as far as class consciousness was concerned. There was a different situation. There was a difference in the situation as to whether or not the workers in the NMU in their majority—I’m not talking about those who went to Murmansk—whether they were won to the war effort in the same way as they were in other places. So, maybe Curran did do that—were able to use that in the NMU. It simply can’t be the case in the UAW.

[01:57:41] **HOWARD:** Well, it was. I mean, that’s the reading—

[01:57:42] **ARCHIE:** What happened in the UAW?

[01:57:46] **HOWARD:** There were three factions—

[01:57:46] **ARCHIE:** They said, “The communists sold you out?”

[01:57:47] **HOWARD:** Pretty much. The Trotskyites, of course, said that everyone was selling out everyone else. That’s always been their position, that no one should collaborate. You had the sort of middle-of-the-road socialists forces led by Reuther who argued that you should have peace rates only on war production and nothing else. Then you had the left forces led by Addis and in alliance with the CP, and they were arguing that you should have peace rates on everything and made a number of speeches about the importance of speed-up and producing for the war effort. Then, after the war, Reuther was able to turn on the left, the CP in this case, and say, “These were the guys that tried to sell you out on peace rates.” Piece rates is what did them in,

apparently. There's a number of authors from left, middle, and right who've taken that kind of an analysis of the situation.

[01:58:32] **ARCHIE:** Alright, alright.

[01:58:33] **HOWARD:** Now, the auto workers were more class conscious than most so they may have been especially sensitive to those arguments. But then how do we explain a Kearney? What did Kearney's election in Local 10 mean in the ILWU?

[01:58:49] **ARCHIE:** I'll tell you. I was there.

[01:58:50] **HOWARD:** Good, because I can't get a straight answer on that.

[01:58:52] **ARCHIE:** I will tell you; I was there.

Kearney's election in Local 10—when he was first elected, his campaign was anti-communist. I know because I have among my files some place a leaflet he issued about me.

[01:59:14] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[01:59:17] **ARCHIE:** That's right. Exposing me as a communist.

[01:59:21] **HOWARD:** By the way, was there any exposing to be done? You were an open member, right?

[01:59:24] **ARCHIE:** Of course! So I said that. Somebody would say, "Why don't you sue him?" I'd say, "Sue him for what? Who don't know I'm a communist?" I put out a piece of paper of my own. As a matter of fact, I wrote the union board. I put it in the bulletin. See, he put out a separate piece of paper. I put it in the union bulletin. Everybody knows my politics. Great discovery Kearney made. But there was a right wing in the longshoremen and in Local 10 at that time. Organized around—well, they called it the Democratic Party Club. They used to meet separately and organize their strategy and all that kind of stuff. I never remember that Kearney ever campaigned—I mean, he may have said to people quietly behind the scenes, I don't know. I never ran into it. But Kearney's campaign had to do with an anti-communist position.

[02:00:29] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[02:00:30] **ARCHIE:** He was first elected as vice president.

[02:00:32] **HOWARD:** Under [Germain] Bulcke, is that right?

[02:00:35] **ARCHIE:** Under Bulcke, right. I think so.

[02:00:37] **HOWARD:** That was a strange mix right there, wasn't it? Bulcke was identified as part of the left, Bridges' leadership.

[02:00:43] **ARCHIE:** I think Kearney just ran as an independent. He didn't run as a partner, as part of the slate.

[02:00:49] **HOWARD:** But clearly he was identified as a right-winger even then, wasn't he?

[02:00:51] **ARCHIE:** Who?

[02:00:52] **HOWARD:** Kearney.

[02:00:52] **ARCHIE:** Yes! So why are you surprised? See, I don't understand—wait a minute. Why are you surprised that the right wing was able to make headway in the longshore union? Why are you surprised?

[02:01:06] **HOWARD:** Maybe that's the question, because my image of the longshoremen is that they went through these struggle with Bridges; they supported Bridges, who was accused of being a communist and was obviously a radical if he wasn't a communist. Here they are, all of a sudden, electing a guy who was an anti-communist right-winger.

[02:01:21] **ARCHIE:** Now, who elected him?

[02:01:23] **HOWARD:** The rank and file who voted.

[02:01:24] **ARCHIE:** Who are the rank and file?

[02:01:26] **HOWARD:** The members of Local 10.

[02:01:28] **ARCHIE:** Really, and where do they come from? See, the ones who fought the battle—Kearney wasn't in the '34 Strike. He wasn't in the '34 Strike; Kearney came in later.

[02:01:36] **HOWARD:** When did he come in? Do you know? I thought '36 or something like that.

[02:01:39] **ARCHIE:** Maybe, something like that. But he wasn't in the '34 Strike. The bulk of the people came in during the war.

We fought a campaign against discrimination. We fought to take in Black people—particularly Blacks, but not only. Kearney and his cohorts fought against that.

[02:02:07] **HOWARD:** On what grounds?

[02:02:12] **ARCHIE:** Too many Blacks. A racist position.

[02:02:14] **HOWARD:** It was?

[02:02:15] **ARCHIE:** Now you don't do it openly! You don't put that down on a piece of paper, but you do it. I know because they talked to me like that.

[02:02:23] **HOWARD:** It wasn't just a question of work availability, was it?

[02:02:26] **ARCHIE:** Well, when the war comes to an end, you get rid of these sons-of-bitches. He got defeated. He made the motion. Bridges—well, I was one of those, too, when I came back after the war. The first one was in '46. I wasn't back yet. They cut off a thousand people. Who were they? Blacks for the most part. In '48 Kearney led the fight to do it again. Not because they were Blacks, but because there's too many people.

[02:02:57] **HOWARD:** Though Blacks were going to be disproportionately affected, right?

[02:02:59] **ARCHIE:** They're the last ones hired. So that's who you get rid of.

[END PART FOUR/BEGIN PART FIVE]

See, I was there. This history I know; I lived it. Nobody's going to bullshit me about it. Like I said, we stopped it. We stopped the cut-off in '48. Bridges fought [alongside] with us. There were some problems about getting him lined up.

[02:03:27] **HOWARD:** Getting Bridges lined up?

[02:03:28] **ARCHIE:** Right. Oh yes.

[02:03:30] **HOWARD:** Do you want to discuss that?

[02:03:31] **ARCHIE:** Well, I don't think he fully understood the situation. When he began to understand it—when Bridges understands a situation, he goes like a house on fire. He was excellent on the thing. The only problem was, I don't think he understood it. He didn't understand it because he, too, said, "Well, there are a lot of men." So our argument was make the employers pay for it. Well, anyway, finally he was won, and he went to town.

[02:04:03] **HOWARD:** He did submit a proposal of his own to cut back the workforce, didn't he? At some point?

[02:04:09] **ARCHIE:** I think the earlier '46 thing. He may have. I wasn't here, now. So I didn't live that. But that may be correct. But in '48, he fought against Kearney. It was Kearney's proposal; Kearney's the one who made it. So you had a majority of white people in the union local at the time. That was Kearney's position. Those who voted for Kearney voted for his position that he took.

[02:04:44] **HOWARD:** So there was a majority of white people, and yet Kearney's position was defeated. Is that correct?

[02:04:49] **ARCHIE:** That's correct.

[02:04:50] **HOWARD:** So obviously a lot of white people didn't follow to the race-baiting?

[02:04:52] **ARCHIE:** Because of the point that you said. Just the same, there was a tremendous amount of understanding of class consciousness among the longshoremen, just the same.

[02:05:03] **HOWARD:** Then why did they ever elect Kearney in the first place?

[02:05:06] **ARCHIE:** Because, while you can win on the issue, there was enough people who agreed with him—and as time went on, even the people who voted not to cut off people began to get shaky. He kept making his appeal. First time he got elected was as vice president, not as president. Then times changed. Now, we're talking about Kearney. Times changed.

[02:05:46] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you a question if I can, while I've got you on Kearney.

[02:05:48] **ARCHIE:** Sure, I haven't got anything to say on Kearney, but go ahead.

[02:05:51] **HOWARD:** A number of people have told me that, contrary to what I'm suggesting, that Kearney could have been right, left, or center. He was right, but the workers voted him into office basically because he

was a competent trade union official. He knew how to chair meetings. He had a certain degree of charisma, and he had a good sense of humor. In other words, it had very little to do with his politics.

[02:06:13] **ARCHIE:** He had that, and more. Kearney changed as time went on. Kearney became the exponent of the struggle against the employers' plans to change the situation in the longshoremen through the introduction of machinery and automation. He became the exponent.

[02:06:56] **HOWARD:** I'm not sure I follow that. He opposed that introduction—

[02:07:00] **ARCHIE:** Bridges. He opposed Bridges on that.

[02:07:01] **HOWARD:** Oh, he did.

[02:07:02] **ARCHIE:** As did we.

[02:07:04] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[02:07:05] **ARCHIE:** That is correct.

[02:07:07] **HOWARD:** Well, I know Political Affairs, after the agreement came down, they gave lukewarm support to it in 1963.

[02:07:17] **ARCHIE:** Yes, they did.

[02:07:17] **HOWARD:** Isn't that true? Joe Lima or something like that wrote an article?

[02:07:23] **ARCHIE:** His name is Mickey Lima. He also wrote another article later on in which he changed. There was a dispute in the left, division in the left, on how to handle this thing.

[02:07:43] **HOWARD:** At what point was Kearney challenging M&M [Mechanization and Modernization Agreement of] or containerization, mechanization?

[02:07:48] **ARCHIE:** Kearney challenged M&M from the beginning. From the beginning.

[02:07:54] **HOWARD:** Like what, early fifties?

[02:07:55] **ARCHIE:** '60. M&M came in '60.

[02:07:59] **HOWARD:** Kearney was around all that time?

[02:08:01] **ARCHIE:** He was around from '38!

[02:08:02] **HOWARD:** I mean, he was an official in the union then?

[02:08:05] **ARCHIE:** Off and on, yes.

[02:08:06] **HOWARD:** During the postwar period for all that time.

[02:08:08] **ARCHIE:** Yes, that's correct. Off and on. You know we have a two year limit.

[02:08:14] **HOWARD:** Well, let me first ask you about that. You're saying it was that and more. It wasn't just Kearney's charisma.

[02:08:21] **ARCHIE:** He changed.

[02:08:21] **HOWARD:** Kearney himself actually changed.

[02:08:24] **ARCHIE:** Changed, right.

[02:08:26] **HOWARD:** And became quite militant near the end of it.

[02:08:28] **ARCHIE:** Became much more knowledgeable and militant in that respect. Was one of the Catholics who worldwide began to make these changes which you see now. So he changed. But he got in originally, office, as an anti-communist.

[02:08:52] **HOWARD:** How do you explain that?

[02:08:54] **ARCHIE:** I told you. There was people there who weren't in the '34 Strike. Enough to elect him. And I forget who he ran against—it depends who he ran against.

[02:09:04] **HOWARD:** Sure, sure.

[02:09:05] **ARCHIE:** I forget. Then he got more prestige, and so on and so forth.

You know, see, you made a point before that I want to come back. I think that some people—I'm not saying you—but some people have a very simple approach to class consciousness. That once a worker has class consciousness, he or she has it forever. Not true! Not true! They lose it! They lose it! Why do they lose it? Because certain things happen. Communists make mistakes. The work situation gets better. The wife doesn't want him to be so active. He gets promoted from a hold man to a gang boss, from a gang boss to a walking boss. Then people see, well that's the way to get ahead. Now when they couldn't do that before, then it was a different situation. But now you have a chance to do it.

Life is complicated.

[02:10:15] **HOWARD:** I know. I—

[02:10:17] **ARCHIE:** People lose their class consciousness. We had people, strongest communists, who became—well, some of them became stool pigeons [decoy or informer] . I ain't even talking about them. Some of them never even became stool pigeons. Remained strong union men, but they were no more class conscious than the man in the moon. They lost all of that and went on to something else. Life offered them something else. That's the way things work. It goes up and down, up and down. Ebb and flow. Lenin spoke about the ebb and flow. There's ebb and flow.

So the class consciousness among the longshoremen, even those who were in the '34 Strike and the other strikes, they too—many of them lost their class consciousness. Then there were some new people who came in and never went through these struggles. They never went through these struggles. That's how he got elected.

Now, he never, he Kearney, even when he got elected, never, never would say on that he would sell out the men on conditions.

[02:11:30] **HOWARD:** Where did he differ, on questions of foreign policy mostly, right?

[02:11:35] **ARCHIE:** The question of the number of men in the union. Our policy in regards to fighting for equality with Black people, for Black people, with Black people. The need to take special measures to make sure that Black people not only come into the union, but they get promoted. That seniority in certain instances don't stand in the way.

[02:12:00] **HOWARD:** How was the voting—how did it break down on those questions, among the membership? In other words, were there generational splits, like the '34 men versus the others? There obviously had to be a racial split going on there. I'm sure the Black people generally sided against Kearney.

[02:12:16] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yes, for a long time. But later on, he won them. Because he changed. Later on, he won them. In the beginning, oh yes.

[02:12:26] **HOWARD:** I thought they always remained loyal to Bridges.

[02:12:29] **ARCHIE:** No sir. No, no. He changed. The Catholic Church changed, and he changed, too. I'm telling you, he's one of those Catholics that changed. It was a worldwide process.

[02:12:40] **HOWARD:** So you consider him fairly progressive by the end?

[02:12:42] **ARCHIE:** At the end, he was fairly progressive. When he died, he was a progressive person. He and I, for an example, would get along pretty good. In particular, we got along in fighting against the M&M. Oh yeah, we got along fine in fighting against the M&M. Goddamn right.

[02:12:59] **HOWARD:** Alright, that's going to be the next thing. But, before we get there, I want to talk about screening—which I imagine you had some personal experiences with.

[02:13:05] **ARCHIE:** Yes.

[02:13:06] **HOWARD:** How extensive was screening? Do you have any sense?

[02:13:10] **ARCHIE:** Oh, it was terrible for the seamen. Almost complete.

[02:13:14] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[02:13:15] **ARCHIE:** That's correct.

[02:13:15] **HOWARD:** The reason it was more effective there than among the longshoremen was? Because they had a collaborationist leadership, they went along with it?

[02:13:22] **ARCHIE:** I would say that was one of the main reasons. The membership was not as willing to protect them as they were in the longshoremen. Longshoremen—one thing you gotta say about Bridges and ILWU leadership: they never gave in on the question of political prosecution. They never gave in.

[02:13:56] **HOWARD:** Bridges didn't, and the international didn't, but wasn't he overruled? Wasn't his position defeated? Because obviously they did go along with screening. There was a Coos Bay conference or caucus, and my understanding is that Bridges' position of non-cooperation—



[02:14:14] **ARCHIE:** He was defeated in regard to the military operation only.

[02:14:19] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[02:14:21] **ARCHIE:** But not civilian operation.

[02:14:22] **HOWARD:** Yeah. So that's what it was—they were screened off the military docks, but not the rest. The Coast Guard's original proposition was total screening.

[02:14:31] **ARCHIE:** Right.

[02:14:32] **HOWARD:** Were you screened?

[02:14:33] **ARCHIE:** Yes. Off a military ship.

[02:14:35] **HOWARD:** Yeah. How many others were screened? Do you have any idea?

[02:14:39] **ARCHIE:** In San Francisco, at least 250. Mostly Black people.

[02:14:43] **HOWARD:** Mostly Blacks.

[02:14:43] **ARCHIE:** Yes. Readers of the People's World [grassroots newspaper associated with the Communist Party] and supporters of Bridges, signers of petitions in support of Bridges and against Bridges' deportation, et cetera, et cetera.

[02:14:53] **HOWARD:** That's just longshore, 250?

[02:14:55] **ARCHIE:** That's what I'm talking about.

[02:14:57] **HOWARD:** Wow.

[02:14:57] **ARCHIE:** Excuse me, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. That's the military. That's all I was speaking to, the longshore.

[02:15:03] **HOWARD:** Wow, 250.

[02:15:04] **ARCHIE:** Who were screened off of the military docks? Certainly.

[02:15:10] **HOWARD:** What kind of an effect did that have on silencing militancy?

[02:15:14] **ARCHIE:** It did, it had its effect on some people. Really, people came to me saying, "Brown, don't send me the People's World. Watch out." I had to laugh because—you know I had a case. I was arrested and charged with violation of the Landrum-Griffin Act [deals with relationship between unions and members] . You know about that?

[02:15:37] **HOWARD:** A little later, when you ran for union office?

[02:15:38] **ARCHIE:** Yes, that's correct. I'd been a member of the executive board for 20 years, and all of a sudden they decided that's a having an official position. Therefore I was violating the Landrum-Griffin Act

because I was a communist and an official of the union at the same time. The union fought that tooth and nail. They supplied the money and the attorneys and everything else. We won it; finally, we won it. I'm relating this to the question you asked before about how did it affect militancy.

Guys came to me, very friendly, "Hey, Brown, you're all right. Now, take it easy. Don't give them another chance." I told them, "Go screw yourself. What's the matter? Are you out of your cotton-pickin' mind? If you want to take it easy, you take it easy. The reason we got this kind of thing is we fight. You better support us who fight." That kind of a thing. These guys were strong fighters themselves before, but they cut out taking the People's World, wouldn't sign petitions. That's what happened. You bet your life it had its effect. I was surprised we were able to keep the militancy that we were able to, to the degree that we were able to keep it.

[02:16:58] **HOWARD:** Of the people that were screened, were the majority screened for political reasons, or were there other things like, maybe, alcoholism or inefficiency at work? That's what the Army's position was, that they didn't screen hardly any people for political reasons.

[02:17:11] **ARCHIE:** Bullshit.

[02:17:11] **HOWARD:** That the vast majority were because they were alcoholics or they were bad security or something.

[02:17:15] **ARCHIE:** Well, I ain't no alcoholic, that's for sure. I'll tell you, we went over the list. We had the list of who was screened. They were signers of petitions for Bridges; they were readers of the People's World. That's who they were—that's the people who got screened.

[02:17:31] **HOWARD:** Do you know where that list might be?

[02:17:38] **ARCHIE:** I don't know if you can get to your library, ILWU library, and ask them. I don't know if they kept it in the library. I know that—what's his name? The guy who was vice president, the Black guy.

[02:17:56] **HOWARD:** Of Local 10?

[02:17:58] **ARCHIE:** Of the international. He wasn't an officer in Local 10, he was of the international. Took him on as a regional director, then he got elected as vice president.

[02:18:08] **HOWARD:** Not Nate Mosely?

[02:18:11] **ARCHIE:** Oh, no, no. His name is Joe Mosely. Not that jerk. But anyway.

[02:18:19] **HOWARD:** Oh, I know, Curtis McLean?

[02:18:22] **ARCHIE:** No, not Curtis. Curtis came from warehouse.

[02:18:25] **HOWARD:** Oh, okay.

[02:18:25] **ARCHIE:** He's right in front of me. The name's on the tip of my tongue. We'll get it. Anyways, he was vice president—Chester. Bill, William Chester. He had the list, I remember.

[02:18:40] **HOWARD:** He did?

[02:18:40] **ARCHIE:** Yep, he had the list.

[02:18:48] **HOWARD:** That's interesting, your estimate of 250, because the Army estimated less than that for the entire coast.

[02:18:54] **ARCHIE:** Bullshit. 250 in San Francisco.

[02:18:58] **HOWARD:** That's a sizable number of people to screen off.

[02:19:06] **ARCHIE:** I don't know how the Army counts. Everybody would take their turn to go work for the Army. After the war, it got less and less and less. As a matter, at the time I didn't give a damn if I was screened or not. I got plenty of work anyway. Whenever I got called to an Army job, I said, "Well, I can't go." They all knew it, so they would give me a civilian job. The rest of us, the same way. I put in for a pass to the Army. Now many of these people who were screened didn't even put in for it. You follow me?

[02:19:45] **HOWARD:** Mm-hmm.

[02:19:46] **ARCHIE:** They didn't put in for it because they knew, because other guys had put in for it, and they were refused. So they figured, what the hell am I going down and there and going through that hassle for? I subscribe to the People's World—

[02:19:55] **HOWARD:** Oh, so you're only screened if you put in for the Army?

[02:19:58] **ARCHIE:** How can you tell? See, how can you tell? See, you know that you're going to be screened. You know that you're going to be screened.

[02:20:08] **HOWARD:** Oh. That's a very important point. Then they might be right in only screening off 100 or whatever. But its effect is much wider than that in discouraging—oh.

[02:20:15] **ARCHIE:** Yes, because people wouldn't go. "Why would I want to bother with that?"

[02:20:21] **HOWARD:** So you're only screened when you applied to work on a military dock?

[02:20:24] **ARCHIE:** How else could you tell? See you go down—

[02:20:26] **HOWARD:** I thought they screened everyone automatically. That was my impression, but of course that isn't true.

[02:20:31] **ARCHIE:** Tell you what happened. You have to have a Coast Guard pass in order to get in on an Army dock. You understand? So you go to put in an application for a Coast Guard pass. If you put in the application, and you were one of those they wanted screened, they would refuse to give you a Coast Guard pass. That's how you knew for sure. When people saw, when the workers saw that so-and-so and so-and-so had gone down and were refused, they said, "What the hell's the use in me even going? I'm in the same category."

So I don't know how they figure it. They say only so many people applied, and we turned down so many and so many.

[02:21:13] **HOWARD:** Okay, that's an important point.

Then I guess this pretty much takes us up to the M&M Agreement. You've told us that the party's position was in opposition to the M&M Agreement. Did that ever change?

[02:21:33] **ARCHIE:** No, let me tell you. Changed a couple times. Not really changed, but let me tell you. A different stress. I'm trying to remember, but I think the discussion started in 1959. Or maybe even before that. About this great, glorious experiment that was going to take place. Lou Goldblatt [longtime ILWU Secretary-Treasurer] had a name for it—what did he call it? I forget. Anyway, it had to do with this was a remarkable achievement on the part of the workers and being able to have their input in regards to what was happening. In regard to automation.

Anybody that opposed M&M was accused of being against progress and against machines. We told them from the beginning, "Bullshit." They can have all the machines they want. We just want the man to get the benefit of it, not just the employers. We said, "Keep the rules. Keep the same conditions." We don't care if they use the men or not—that's up to the employers to organize that. We had a 16-man gang; keep them, instead of cutting them back to 9 or 10. The gang and some of the operations had no manning scale on it at all—whatever the employers wanted. That didn't come about all of a sudden. That came about over a period of years.

[02:23:38] **HOWARD:** That position, you mean?

[02:23:39] **ARCHIE:** No, that the gangs were cut. That the employers began to get the right to order, on certain kind of jobs, to order whatever they wanted. There was no scale on it.

[02:23:51] **HOWARD:** What was Bridges' response to this? To your position?

[02:23:56] **ARCHIE:** He was for the M&M.

[02:23:57] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[02:23:58] **ARCHIE:** Therefore, when we were against the M&M, he was very critical of us, to say the least.

[02:24:05] **HOWARD:** I'd actually like to know what exactly did he say. His position must have been, I'm guessing, something like, "Well, that's a nice pipe dream, fellas, but there's no way they're going to introduce mechanization unless we're willing give up something. You have to trade off your work rules to get a little piece of a machine."

[02:24:19] **ARCHIE:** That's right.

[02:24:21] **HOWARD:** So you were just basically arguing you had better strength—you could demand more than he was expecting. Is that what it was?

Because you both agreed the machines were okay.

[02:24:32] **ARCHIE:** We both agreed the machines were coming in. Nobody's going to stand in their way. We did not agree that machines necessarily lightened the burden of work. That we did not agree. He always argued the machines will take away the back-breaking work. Which in some cases, not all cases, has proven true. The mental strain of some of these jobs is terrific. Not the physical, but the mental strain is something else. We had that argument on the specifics of it.

We in the Party—there were splits; there were differences. But by and large we agreed that we were against the M&M in the form that it was. The zinger that sold it to these old-timers who fought in ‘34 Strike was that they would get \$7,000 upon retirement. All these old-timers with whom I’d grown up and fought with and so on, “What’s the matter with you, Brown?” they said to me. “What’s wrong with getting \$7,000?” I said, “You know, if some employer came to you yesterday or a year ago and said, ‘Will you sell out the union for \$25,000?’ you’d spit in his eye.” So they said, “Well, Bridges wouldn’t sell us out.” I was in no position to say, “Yes, Bridges will sell you out.” First of all, my position was Bridges is making a big mistake himself. I think to this day his purpose wasn’t to sell anybody out. He really thought that was the best thing to do. So I would tell them, “I think he’s making a mistake.” They said, “We don’t think he’s making a mistake.”

So the contract was voted up.

[02:26:37] **HOWARD:** No, it was rejected in Los Angeles, San Pedro.

[02:26:41] **ARCHIE:** M&M?

[02:26:41] **HOWARD:** Yes.

[02:26:42] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yes, that’s correct. Coastwise, finally, the contract was adopted.

[02:26:48] **HOWARD:** It was a pretty close vote, too, as I understand it.

[02:26:52] **ARCHIE:** See, I’ll tell you, we had a system. Once a big local rejects a pact, then you have to have a re-vote. Two-thirds have to pass it. Two-thirds passed it.

[02:27:07] **HOWARD:** Oh, they did?

[02:27:07] **ARCHIE:** Coastwise? Oh, certainly.

[02:27:10] **HOWARD:** I didn’t know that.

[02:27:10] **ARCHIE:** Otherwise it would never become contract. Oh yes.

[02:27:15] **HOWARD:** Who opposed Bridges on this question? Was there any pattern to the opposition?

[02:27:25] **ARCHIE:** We had a problem because all these antis, including the Trots—they opposed it. Kearney, in his own way, opposed it in the beginning. He became stronger later. The Los Angeles people, who I trusted about as far as I could throw this house, they opposed it. Because I knew their record. But actually, later on, I began to see that they made sense, despite their past record. Now, these were the kind of people who tended to be right-wing on political situations and so forth. When it came to job conditions, they were good fighters. It was from that standpoint that they opposed it. I was a delegate to the convention, and I voted with them against the M&M. I advocated its defeat in San Francisco.

But, like you say, Pedro voted it down. Then they had to have a re-vote. The rule is it has to be two-thirds coastwise.

[02:28:43] **HOWARD:** And two-thirds went for it.

[02:28:45] **ARCHIE:** Yes, they would never have been able to adopt it. Oh yes. The only way. See, if no big local, or unit as they call it, voted against it, then 51 percent could carry. But once a big local votes against it, then you have to have a re-vote, and it takes two-thirds. Two-thirds carry, no question. When the re-vote took place, I remember, man. We had more pressure on us than you can shake a stick at. Boy, there was a lot of pressure.

[02:29:21] **HOWARD:** Directed from whom?

[02:29:24] **ARCHIE:** From the officials. They sicced the old-timers on me. They sicced them on me. Like I told you.

[02:29:35] **HOWARD:** What was their rap to you?

[02:29:36] **ARCHIE:** “What’s wrong with us getting \$7,000, Brown?” I says, well, I told you what I said.

[02:29:43] **HOWARD:** What was their response to that?

[02:29:44] **ARCHIE:** They said, “The conditions aren’t going to get worse. You don’t think Bridges is going to sell you out, do you?”

[02:29:49] **HOWARD:** So it’s this undying faith in Bridges really is the bottom line.

[02:29:54] **ARCHIE:** And in the program, right? “This union’s going to remain. Bridges is going to be head of it, for a while, anyway. We’re going to continue fighting, and this is a game. The employers want to have to machine, and we said we want some of that. So they gave us \$7,000. What the hell’s wrong with that? They gave us part of the gains of the machine. What’s wrong with that?” See? Good fighters, man, they’d give their lives for the union. That’s how class collaboration takes its toll. That’s how it takes its toll over the years.

[02:30:32] **HOWARD:** Particularly when you have someone who’s been identified as a fighter pushing a program like that.

[02:30:35] **ARCHIE:** Right, absolutely. No question. Then I want to come to that part after the vote was in. The next question was how do you get the best out of it. You don’t continue the same struggle; you don’t say, “Down with ‘em!” There were some who wanted to do that. We couldn’t see any percentage in that, of continuing the struggle after the vote was taken. It was a five-year goddamn contract. What are you going to do about conditions during these five years? What kind of struggle are you going to have? The struggle isn’t trying to defeat the M&M; it’s voted up! What the hell are you going to do? We had a difference of opinion with the Trots and others on that level. They accused me of selling out and so on. So, I just told them—I got up at one of the membership meetings, and I said, “I for one, and we don’t object to the old-timers getting as much as they possibly can. What we object to, and we’re going to continue to fight, is the worsening of the conditions for the rest of us, period.” That’s what I said. So the old-timers were happy, and they gave me a big hand because I said that, finally, and so on and so forth. Then we tried to organize a struggle against the ravages of M&M. Boy, that was some struggle.

[02:32:03] **HOWARD:** What form did that take?

[02:32:10] **ARCHIE:** They had a form, what they called “key letters.” I don’t know where the hell it came from; I don’t even know what the hell it means. But it gave the employers the right, whenever they introduced a

new form of operation, they could set [pounds table] the number of men that they wanted and how the operation should work.

[02:32:31] **HOWARD:** That's amazing.

[02:32:32] **ARCHIE:** All they had to do was notify the union to that effect. Then if you had agreements about it, you complied, but then you went up to the machinery. That wrecked us. It just wrecked us. So, we constantly tried to fight it, but they'd say, "Here it is [pounds table], in the contract. Key letter number 1, key letter number 5, blah blah blah."

[02:32:52] **HOWARD:** You know what's so interesting about this—

[02:32:53] **ARCHIE:** I want to tell you.

[02:32:54] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[02:32:58] **ARCHIE:** I told you there was a split in our ranks, and so, by '63, which is two years after we voted on the contract, Mickey Lima wrote this article. He made our position pretty clear, but he gave a modified okay to it. Some of us, including me, never agreed to that. But that was the position and so on. Two years later, in '65, he wrote another one. You ought to get that one. Political Affairs, 1965, I think it is.

[02:33:28] **HOWARD:** Do you know what month?

[END PART FIVE/BEGIN PART SIX]

[02:33:34] **ARCHIE:** And the main basis he said there was that—which was true—he said Bridges had made a statement. "We didn't realize," said Bridges, "that they could get down to so few men." Like some places just two men! Mickey said, "Neither did we." But now we understand that that was a mistake and changed positions as far as M&M is concerned.

[02:34:07] **HOWARD:** Do you think that Bridges didn't realize it, or he knew it all along and just didn't know what else he could do?

[02:34:13] **ARCHIE:** I think, as far as Harry is concerned, Harry is with the workers. I think he makes these terrible errors because of an ideological stand. Meaning that he doesn't change his mind about this is the working class, leadership, the role that it plays, stuff like that. But just the same, people get their minds changed, their thinking changed, by events that take place. He thinks the best way to protect to the workers under the circumstances is to have this kind of a thing. No better way to protect the workers. Now, I don't know how else to explain it. I believe that when he said that he never thought they'd get down to that low, that's true. I don't think the employers believed it. I don't think the employers knew. Nobody knew. That's why our program was a good one which said keep the manning scale.

[02:35:32] **HOWARD:** Because you know that's what the ILA accomplished. They were able to retain their manning—

[02:35:36] **ARCHIE:** I know what the ILA accomplished.

[02:35:37] **HOWARD:** —scales. They got compensation based on tonnage rather than man-hours worked. And a whole number of things.

[02:35:44] **ARCHIE:** You better look into that, too.

Now the good part was that they refused M&M, and they kept their manning scale. Hey, that is good. There is a lot of things that they did which undermined that. You go take a look at it.

[02:35:58] **HOWARD:** Like what?

They set up a 50-mile radius. Are you familiar with that?

[02:36:07] **ARCHIE:** That was very good, too, the 50-mile radius [any cargo within 50 miles had to be handled on the dock] . I'll tell you what, here we have a system—well, we had the system. There was two categories of workers, A and B. You know about that. Back East, particularly in New York I'm talking about, from A to H.

[02:36:31] **HOWARD:** What do you mean? That many men?

[02:36:32] **ARCHIE:** A-B-C-D-F-G-H. That many categories of workers. Each one with different benefits and so on and so forth. Different rights, different benefits. The rules that apply to men up through C or D didn't apply to H. They undermined their whole position by doing that to the extent—you'll notice, even though they kept their manning scale, take a look at the loss of men in the New York Harbor just the same. The proportion is almost the same as it is here. Loss of men.

[02:37:17] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[02:37:20] **ARCHIE:** Correct.

[02:37:21] **HOWARD:** I don't know.

[02:37:22] **ARCHIE:** Alright, take a look at it.

[02:37:27] **HOWARD:** They've got 60,000 members now.

[02:37:29] **ARCHIE:** Who has?

[02:37:29] **HOWARD:** The ILA.

[02:37:30] **ARCHIE:** Coastwise?

[02:37:31] **HOWARD:** Yeah, for the entire thing, right.

[02:37:33] **ARCHIE:** Right.

[02:37:34] **HOWARD:** You're saying, in New York in particular, there's been a drop off almost as much as—

[02:37:38] **ARCHIE:** You know, they got 12,000 or 13,000 or 14,000 now.

[02:37:46] **HOWARD:** In New York?

[02:37:46] **ARCHIE:** In New York. That's the biggest port. They used to have 20 or 25,000.



[02:37:53] **HOWARD:** That's true because that's about what it is—well, on the West Coast, it's always been about the same as New York.

[02:37:59] **ARCHIE:** They used to have 25,000.

[02:37:59] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[02:37:59] **ARCHIE:** Bridges always used to say, “You guys always talk about the ILA. They lost as many men as we did.” He'd always give us that shot.

[02:38:10] **HOWARD:** You think it's true?

[02:38:12] **ARCHIE:** Of course they did, but for other reasons. Not because they gave up their manning. That isn't the reason for it. They're a class collaboration bunch from the beginning. They got to them a different way.

Take the manning thing. All right. They had 17 men in a gang. 17 men were ordered to a container ship. Here, you're lucky to get six men aboard the ship.

[02:38:40] **HOWARD:** Then why did they lose so many? Why did the ILA lose so many?

[02:38:43] **ARCHIE:** I'm going to tell you. We don't count the people on the dock who run the heisters and the crane operators. We don't count them. They count them. In a 17-man gang, crane operators, heisters, as well as the men who work on the ship and on the dock—that's the 17.

[02:39:12] **HOWARD:** In New York.

[02:39:12] **ARCHIE:** In New York. Now, furthermore, that gang works one hatch at a time, so to speak. So they finish that one, they go to the next one. Same 17. Then they go to the next one. They don't order three gangs; they order one gang.

[02:39:36] **HOWARD:** I see.

[02:39:38] **ARCHIE:** We never—the party never—the left around here never said, “We got a solution. All you have to keep is the manning scale.” We said, “It's just part of the class struggle. Get what you can out of these sons of bitches.” That's the point. Even if you keep the manning scale, who says that you're going to maintain the same number of men and conditions? They ain't going to keep the same number of men and conditions when they spend so much money on dead labor, on machinery. We know that. But it depends on the struggle how soon they're able to win.

[02:40:18] **HOWARD:** Do you think yours was a realistic position? About saying that—

[02:40:23] **ARCHIE:** Just as realistic as the ILA.

[02:40:25] **HOWARD:** Yeah, that's what I'm thinking.

[02:40:26] **ARCHIE:** Sure, absolutely. Instead of the \$7,000, yes. Absolutely. We said this was a better way to fly.

[02:40:35] **HOWARD:** And, on the basis of that, there would have been a much larger longshore labor force.

[02:40:38] **ARCHIE:** I think so. I don't know for how long, but. . . [coughs]

[02:40:44] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[02:40:48] **ARCHIE:** So we had this division in the party, and then came the '66 agreement. Five years were up. Then the party was united, no question about it. We were against the extension of the M&M, for a shorter agreement, three years instead of five—less than five anyway. Then they got some new gimmicks in there. It's not that I don't like to, but it takes so much time on this question of what we call the 9.43 stance [refers to clause 9.43 of the contract that deals with steady employees, or workers employed directly by the stevedoring companies] .

[02:41:27] **HOWARD:** I'm not even going to deal with that question, to tell you the truth.

[02:41:28] **ARCHIE:** Well, but that was vital. That goddamn thing was vital to what happened between '66 and '70. From 1961-65, the employers made a huge amount of increase in profits—not from the machinery they introduced but the breakdown of conditions. There wasn't any machinery introduced until '66. Beginning of '66 and through '71, they began to introduce the machinery. They needed this 9.43 thing.

[02:42:04] **HOWARD:** That's interesting. So you're saying that they didn't introduce a lot of mechanization—

[02:42:08] **ARCHIE:** No!

[02:42:08] **HOWARD:** —until '66.

[02:42:09] **ARCHIE:** That's right.

[02:42:10] **HOWARD:** Why not? They just didn't have the capital to do it at that point?

[02:42:12] **ARCHIE:** They made the capital by taking it out of our hides. By breaking down our conditions. That's where they got the capital.

[02:42:20] **HOWARD:** You know who said exactly the same thing?

[02:42:21] **ARCHIE:** Who's that?

[02:42:21] **HOWARD:** Stan Weir. Exactly the same thing. Interesting.

[02:42:30] **ARCHIE:** You now, see, I'm not a great authority. They might have borrowed the money, too. I don't mean they got it only out of our hides. They might have borrowed the money, but they made so goddamn much money off of just breaking down our conditions. We brought that up in the caucuses, how much money they made, and so what they did is increase the take for the guys who retired from \$7,000 to \$13,000.

[02:43:08] **HOWARD:** Pure and simple business unionism.

[02:43:10] **ARCHIE:** Well, a large part of it is business unionism, that's right. You can't stop progress, and you can't stop these machines, and you're dreaming, leading it down a rosy path, so on and so forth. That's what we constantly heard. We told them, "I might be speaking about a rosy path, but you're talking about a nightmare. You watch and see what's going to happen. You'll have a nightmare around here." All right, so, anyway, if it

was up to Local 10, we would have maintained it. Local 10 and, to some extent, 13. Thirteen changed its mind, incidentally.

[02:43:46] **HOWARD:** It did.

[02:43:49] **ARCHIE:** We were the—well, not entirely—in the ‘66 agreement, both San Francisco and Pedro voted it down. Both of us voted it down. They made some changes, and they got their two-thirds. In ‘71, we were the only ones that voted it down. But, by that time, they had changed it so—you still had to have two-thirds, but it didn’t have to have two votes. In other words, on the first vote, even if a big local turned it down, if altogether two-thirds. So you couldn’t argue against it. How are you going to argue against that? “Have another vote!” So, we lost that one in ‘71, too.

San Francisco, all the way through, all the way to this goddamn year, son of a bitch—by 135 votes, they voted for it in San Francisco.

[02:44:47] **HOWARD:** For the contract this year?

[02:44:48] **ARCHIE:** I could have cried, yeah. I could have cried. See, all the other times, ever since ‘61? Down, down, down, down. Every one of them. San Francisco always voted it down. Till this year.

[02:45:02] **HOWARD:** Is the ILWU in your opinion still a left-wing union, to the extent there is a left-wing in the American labor movement?

[02:45:08] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yes, absolutely. No question. How would you judge? Take the conditions on the job—good as any union. Take politics, foreign relations—hey, head and shoulders [above the rest] . On peace? Refusing to ship armaments to El Salvador and Chile? These are all statements. The action, refusing to ship armaments is action.

[02:45:48] **HOWARD:** Okay, I guess, yeah, the real question here is, is the rank and file any more progressive than the rank and file anywhere else? That’s a tough question, I realize.

[02:45:59] **ARCHIE:** On some things, yes. On some things, no.

[02:46:02] **HOWARD:** You know how much the average longshoremen makes? I was astounded. What would you guess?

[02:46:07] **ARCHIE:** \$18,000.

[02:46:09] **HOWARD:** 30 [\$30,000] . I got figures.

[02:46:11] **ARCHIE:** I’d like to see them.

[02:46:13] **HOWARD:** They’re PMA [Pacific Maritime Association] figures, but they have no reason to necessarily lie.

[02:46:16] **ARCHIE:** No, they wouldn’t lie. What year?

[02:46:18] **HOWARD:** 1980.

[02:46:19] **ARCHIE:** 1980? \$30,000? Are you sure?

[02:46:23] **HOWARD:** Yep. I was flabbergasted.

[02:46:28] **ARCHIE:** This is the average?

[02:46:29] **HOWARD:** Yeah, they've broken it down into three categories. Men with over 1,600 hours got \$32,000, and that was half the longshoremen. Men with over 800 hours a year—is that right? Must be 8,000, right? 16,000 and 8,000?

[02:46:45] **ARCHIE:** No, hundred, hundred.

[02:46:45] **HOWARD:** 1,600, okay. Men over 800 made \$30,000. Men with over 200 hours in the year, or something like that, made, I don't know, a little less. But well over two-thirds—I think over three-fourths of the men, longshoremen, made at least \$30,000 in 1980. Shipping clerks were \$40,000. What's the next category up? Foremen were \$50,000.

[02:47:08] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, I believe that.

[02:47:09] **HOWARD:** That's the labor aristocracy.

[02:47:12] **ARCHIE:** Ain't that funny? "Labor aristocracy."

[02:47:13] **HOWARD:** Sounds like it to me.

Were you guys too successful is the question I'm asking, you know? You've got fat cat workers now.

[02:47:25] **ARCHIE:** No, no, no. [whistles] The fight for class consciousness, we went over that. It is true that, as prosperity takes place of a period of years, you have more problems with keeping class consciousness. What's different here with the longshoremen, even though they're making \$30,000 on the average a year, is their insecurity. They feel very insecure.

[02:48:05] **HOWARD:** How?

[02:48:06] **ARCHIE:** Alright.

[02:48:10] **HOWARD:** The guys that are there now can't be laid off, can they?

[02:48:13] **ARCHIE:** No, they can't be laid off, no, no, no.

[02:48:18] **HOWARD:** And they're guaranteed 36 hours a week, or 32?

[02:48:21] **ARCHIE:** They are. They're guaranteed 36 hours straight time.

[02:48:23] **HOWARD:** I can't imagine a working condition that's more secure.

[02:48:26] **ARCHIE:** So it's a contradiction, isn't it? Why do they feel insecure about it? First of all, it's from contract to contract. The end of '84, who knows whether this will continue or not? It's only for the period of time of the contract.

[02:48:52] **HOWARD:** Well, there's no reason necessarily why the employers would try to turn back the clock. They've got a cozy relationship. They're making big bucks off this set-up.

[02:49:03] **ARCHIE:** Tell me about auto. Tell me about turning the clock back at Chrysler, and now General Motors and Ford are demanding some of it.

[02:49:14] **HOWARD:** Mm-hmm.

[02:49:16] **ARCHIE:** They can do it there. Why can't they do it to longshore?

[02:49:19] **HOWARD:** Well, I mean, they saw this coming with foreign competition in from Japanese automakers and stuff like that, too, so. Declining sales of American cars.

[02:49:30] **ARCHIE:** Well, alright.

[02:49:32] **HOWARD:** I mean, there are a lot of workers in competitive industries that are in a much more precarious situation. That literally live from day to day. The classic proletariat. No job security. Poor benefits. Lousy working conditions. It doesn't apply to the longshoremen anymore, it doesn't sound like.

[02:49:52] **ARCHIE:** Their guarantees go from contract to contract.

[02:49:58] **HOWARD:** True of anyone, even a working professional.

[02:50:01] **ARCHIE:** These are the kind of times when employers make demands for cutbacks and takeaways. What would happen if the contract was voted down this time? What would happen if a strike took place?

[02:50:36] **HOWARD:** I don't know.

[02:50:41] **ARCHIE:** What happened to the—a similar situation—what happened to the air [traffic] controllers? How much of a—

[02:50:52] **HOWARD:** They might get busted here.

[02:50:54] **ARCHIE:** How much were they making a year?

[02:50:56] **HOWARD:** Almost as much as the longshore. A lot of money.

[02:50:58] **ARCHIE:** How was their security?

[02:51:00] **HOWARD:** I think it's a very different situation. You've got to recognize the difference of stability of a union that was formed five years ago with the ILWU.

[02:51:08] **ARCHIE:** I hear you. Much better fighting capacity. But we're addressing the question of the feeling of insecurity.

[02:51:17] **HOWARD:** Okay, well, then you're saying that there's always a basis for radicalism or retaining some sense of conflict or militancy because of this insecurity. Is that?

[02:51:27] **ARCHIE:** I'm telling you that there is a campaign against the pay guarantee being un-American. You know, they talk about people on the dole and all that kind of crap. There is that campaign going on, and the guys are worried about that. The guys are worried that—now, see, I'm speaking mainly of San Francisco, where there is a bad working situation. Bad economic situation. There are not that many jobs. They have to draw largely on this pay guarantee. In other ports, where they don't draw on this pay guarantee too much, or very little, they have a better sense of security. I'm sure. That's why you got the kind of votes you did this time.

I'm only referring to the feeling of the men here around the Bay area. I don't know what will happen in the rest of ports because I don't know what's going to happen to the economy in the future. Who knows? I suppose for the next few years it looks like shipping will grow in the Pacific Basin.

[02:53:07] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you—

[02:53:10] **ARCHIE:** Total number of longshoremen continues to decline.

[02:53:18] **HOWARD:** It's increased in a few ports, right? In the Northwest?

[02:53:20] **ARCHIE:** Total number of longshoremen on the coast continues to decline. Despite, in various ports, they've taken on a number of people.

[02:53:30] **HOWARD:** That makes sense.

[02:53:31] **ARCHIE:** 500 in Los Angeles. That's longshoremen and clerks. The last year or so.

[02:53:39] **HOWARD:** A pretty sizable increase.

[02:53:40] **ARCHIE:** Of course! But the total number of longshoremen continues to decline. That's what gives you a sense of insecurity also.

[02:53:49] **HOWARD:** Yeah, yeah. Well I can see that. I just was really floored at that figure of \$30,000. I had no idea that they were making that kind of money. Not that they aren't entitled to it, but that sort of changed my image a great deal.

Let me ask you two final questions because I think we're long on time. I appreciate this. One is the big question: why was Bridges so durable, when all the other left-wing leaders were turned out of office or suffered large membership defections? I know there's no one answer to that, but I just would like your comments.  
[pause]

I guess the classic dilemma is, was it simply that Bridges delivered the goods? Or was there something more? Did they identify with him politically in any way? I know we can't talk about everyone.

[02:54:55] **ARCHIE:** What other union claimed any better conditions for the members than the longshoremen? You talked about him delivering the goods. Those who remain got the benefit of it. Meaning that the union doesn't grow. That was a big factor. Another factor was that who are you going to substitute for him?

[02:55:45] **HOWARD:** Well, during the Cold War, it would have been easy to substitute any anti-communist, right? Who was competent. Kearney, anyone.

[02:55:51] **ARCHIE:** Kearney couldn't have. None of those people. During the Cold War, the men saw the attack upon Bridges as an attack upon them.

[02:56:08] **HOWARD:** Their union at least, right?

[02:56:10] **ARCHIE:** Them and their union, right. If they voted Bridges down, they were going to weaken the union. I think that was pretty much the sentiment and the feeling. The votes show it.

[02:56:33] **HOWARD:** So, if I'm reading you correctly, then there wasn't any particular political identification with Bridges' radical vision of society. Or his constant talk about, well, at some point we'll have to fight for socialism but that's in the distant future. If that's true—

[02:56:51] **ARCHIE:** I don't know—wait awhile, wait awhile. I didn't say that. You said it.

[02:56:55] **HOWARD:** Okay, then, well, comment.

[02:56:56] **ARCHIE:** You said it.

[02:56:57] **HOWARD:** Alright, what do you think about that?

[02:56:59] **ARCHIE:** Now you're asking me a question, that's different. You know, things are so complicated that you can't answer yes or no to a question like that.

[02:57:13] **HOWARD:** I understand that.

[02:57:14] **ARCHIE:** What did people think about Bridges' position in regards to socialism? And particularly his stand vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. They thought, for one thing, he was very consistent. Even though they might not agree with him, and even though some thought he was a nut on that. He was very consistent. He was out in front. He didn't hide it. A lot of the guys on the waterfront, right-wingers, would tell me, "Hey, Brown, there's one thing I like about you. You don't hide what you're for. You get out in front and say it. I like that."

[02:57:52] **HOWARD:** Okay, that's not political agreement, though, is it? It's different.

[02:57:55] **ARCHIE:** No, no.

[02:57:56] **HOWARD:** It's just integrity.

[02:57:57] **ARCHIE:** Integrity. Aye.

[02:57:58] **HOWARD:** See, I haven't ran into one person who has said to me yet that Bridges was supported in part because the men were radical and they identified with his radicalism. I haven't found one person to tell me that yet.

[02:58:10] **ARCHIE:** Well, it was true in the beginning. I would say that during the strike, and right after the strike, for a whole number of years, they identified with Bridges' radicalism. No question.

[02:58:22] **HOWARD:** Before the war, at least.

[02:58:23] **ARCHIE:** Oh yes, before the war. Well, um, no, wait, wait. Certainly before the war.

[02:58:30] **HOWARD:** Mm-hmm.

[02:58:34] **ARCHIE:** What happened during the war we discussed already.

[02:58:36] **HOWARD:** Mm-hmm.

[02:58:41] **ARCHIE:** Bridges was looked upon as a radical after the war, too.

[02:58:45] **HOWARD:** Mm-hmm.

[02:58:46] **ARCHIE:** I don't know how many men made that distinction that you talked about before. They got sold out during the war by these communists, by Bridges, in this instance. I don't know how many men felt that way. Could be that some did. But by and large, he was still at that point a radical. Whether you agreed with him or not, he was a radical. No question about it. He was for friendship with the Soviet Union. That was for sure. He was for peace. That was for sure. No question about that.

[02:59:15] **HOWARD:** Opposed Korea?

[02:59:16] **ARCHIE:** Opposed the Korean War. Didn't do enough about Vietnam, but opposed the Vietnam War. We had a hassle about that. We never succeeded. But everybody reads that the longshoremen opposed the Vietnam War. Everybody reads that automatically. Well, we passed a couple resolutions, that's true. We didn't do damn all. We didn't stop that much going over to Vietnam, even though we communists tried. Matter of fact, we had a couple of stoppages. The arbitrator came down and said, "Go to work," and then they went to work. Then they got on my ass. They said, "What are you trying to do here?"

[03:00:00] **HOWARD:** A number of people have told me that while Bridges took progressive stands on politics and foreign affairs and social matters of the country, that the way he ran his union really didn't differ from anyone else after the war. That, in fact, he even ran it a little bit more conservatively than many leaders in the CIO.

[03:00:24] **ARCHIE:** See, I have not made an investigation of how the conventions were held or whose were adopted and who chaired the meetings of other unions. I do know about the longshoremen. Bridges ran a tight ship. There ain't no question about that. But, the locals could bring in any resolution and motions they wanted. No problem. Any resolutions, any motions the locals passed officially—now Bridges always made that point. Some of us, we had a right as individuals, if we were elected delegates, to introduce a resolution. Then you had to have a certain number. He would many times castigate us for trying to introduce certain dreamy resolutions. But if the local brought in a resolution, as a local, he might fight it but, hey, he recognized it as being legitimate and as something that had to be discussed and addressed. No question about that.

By and large, delegates were able to get the floor and to speak. I won't say that never, ever were people overlooked. He couldn't see them out there raising their hand. I won't say that. But, from what I've seen, by and large, they were able to. Everybody who wanted to speak got to say their piece, including me.

[03:02:00] **HOWARD:** Maybe I didn't make myself clear. You're really addressing the question of internal democracy.

[03:02:04] **ARCHIE:** Yeah. And you are?



[03:02:06] **HOWARD:** I wasn't clear. What I was really talking about was just the way in which he conducted collective bargaining after the war. After '48, I should say really. There's a detente that reached with the employers after '48. They reorganize, accept Bridges as a permanent feature of the longshoremen's union. He sort of works through this thing. He goes through his trial in 1950; the employers come out and support him. A lot of the rhetoric begins to stop flowing from him anymore. Except, again, for his support of foreign policy and the Soviet Union and stuff, he's almost indistinguishable from any other trade union leader. On the collective bargaining front. What do you think of that? I'm posing it more as a statement than as a question.

[03:02:50] **ARCHIE:** I hear you. Hey, I'm not going to defend Bridges in many of the positions he took in collective bargaining. I will not defend him on them. We already went through the question of the M&M and so on. Were there prior arrangements with the employers before the contracts were brought to the conventions, caucuses, and so on? I don't know. Is it possible? It's possible. Is Bridges capable of doing that? Bridges is capable of doing that.

However, what's the point? I remember Stan Weir, or whoever it was, making a big point. "Did you have lunch with [Paul] St. Sure?" I'd have to say, "What the hell has that got to do with anything?" The fact that Bridges had lunch with—the fuck does that have—?

[END PART SIX/BEGIN PART SEVEN]

[missing audio]

See, to me, what is important is if they make agreements with the employers in advance, whether through lunches or secret meetings or however or open meetings, that's what bothers me. If they made these secret agreements, number one. Number two, when they come in—let's say they come in with a program on a contract. Now, if that is not submitted for discussion and amendment and argumentation, that's one story. I think that Bridges and some of the other officials were very strong and high-handed in fighting for their position on certain parts of the contract. Ridiculing people who had a different position. They in turn got ridiculed. Don't think that it was all one way. Which I thought, from my standpoint, was very unfair. Wasn't kosher, wasn't cricket, and stuff like that. That all took place, but it took place in the context where the contract was being discussed out in the open, was subject to amendment, was subject to being taken apart and put back together, and so on.

[03:05:53] **HOWARD:** Kind of how bourgeois democracy works? That's what you're talking about.

[03:05:55] **ARCHIE:** Alright, alright. You know, now another kind of democracy that works is where you have a good leadership of the working class who say, "This is it." But it's for the benefit of the workers.

[03:06:10] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I know. It's a tough trade off, it goes both ways. So, let me see if I can summarize your position on Bridges then. After the war—

[03:06:22] **ARCHIE:** Wait, wait. I want to ask you a question.

[03:06:23] **HOWARD:** Yeah?

[03:06:24] **ARCHIE:** Something occurs to me. You talk about bourgeois democracy. How should discussions on a contract be conducted? What is your opinion?

[03:06:34] **HOWARD:** No, I think that bourgeois democratic forums are the most appropriate way for arriving at a consensus. They are democratic. But I'm saying that they're subject to manipulation.

[03:06:44] **ARCHIE:** Oh, of course!

[03:06:47] **HOWARD:** That's what any voter on the street will tell you, "Hey, we've got a choice between Democrats and Republicans." What are you squawking about? Anyone can run. If you're a communist, go ahead and run. You know there are certain—

[03:06:54] **ARCHIE:** It isn't quite like that, though. You cannot make that argument as far as discussion of contract is concerned. You can't. It ain't a question of Democrats and Republicans.

[03:07:03] **HOWARD:** Well, anyone can make an amendment. That's what you're telling me, right?

[03:07:07] **ARCHIE:** Anyone can make an amendment, that's true.

[03:07:09] **HOWARD:** Some are more likely to be accepted than others.

[03:07:12] **ARCHIE:** True.

[03:07:12] **HOWARD:** Not all are equal. Just like not all candidates running for office are going to be accorded equal media coverage or something.

[03:07:18] **ARCHIE:** No, no, no. That's no good. I ain't going to buy that. It has nothing to do with the media. It has to do with the democracy in the union. That's what I am very concerned about. There was democracy in the ILWU, and remains today. Were there manipulations? There probably were. But there was democracy, and you could expose it if you had the ability and the facts to go on the thing. Then I want to tell you. Once it got through the delegates, and delegates said, "We recommend or don't recommend this contract,"—usually they recommend it—it goes to the membership and there's a vote on it.

[03:08:01] **HOWARD:** No, I think it's one of the most democratic unions in the country. The UE and ILWU, I think, are probably the best examples that I know of.

[03:08:09] **ARCHIE:** I think that, on M&M, a couple of the other contracts, Bridges rode hard. No question. He rode hard and organized his forces. It came down heavy. Did their homework, marshalled their arguments. Even if the arguments weren't correct, they marshalled their arguments and went down to the membership and spoke to them about it. Said, "Don't listen to those dreamy people. They'll get you shit. This is the way to go." So the people believed him. What do you do?

[03:08:43] **HOWARD:** There's no answer to that.

[03:08:47] **ARCHIE:** Once the workers learn, but, you know, \$30,000 is \$30,000.

[03:08:51] **HOWARD:** I hear you.

So, the question of Bridges' radicalism, you won't say either that after the war it had much impact in explaining his durability. In other words, the standard quote that I read on Bridges is, "Bridges was popular despite his politics."

[03:09:14] **ARCHIE:** It's true. That's a good statement. I don't know that it covers the whole situation.

[03:09:22] **HOWARD:** If that's a good statement, then we can hang it up in America.

[03:09:25] **ARCHIE:** No, just a minute. Hold yourself. Bridges was popular despite his radicalism, huh? With so many people. It depends who you're talking about. Are you talking about non-longshoremen?

[03:09:41] **HOWARD:** No, just longshoremen, obviously. People in the ILWU. I'm just looking at longshoremen.

[03:09:46] **ARCHIE:** You're talking about just longshoremen. Bridges was popular despite his radicalism. I don't think that's a true statement as far as the longshoremen.

[03:09:56] **HOWARD:** You don't.

[03:09:56] **ARCHIE:** No, I do not.

[03:09:57] **HOWARD:** Thank God.

[03:09:59] **ARCHIE:** I do not. I misunderstood you. I thought you were talking about the general public.

[03:10:03] **HOWARD:** It's making it very difficult to do a paper on labor radicalism when no one's willing to admit that there was any radicalism in the ILWU.

[03:10:10] **ARCHIE:** Oh, bullshit. There was radicalism in the ILWU, continues to this day.

[03:10:14] **HOWARD:** I know the leadership has always taken radical postures. The question is whether it has seeped down and had any impact on the workers. Are the ILWU rank and file any different from the steelworker rank and file? Or the ILA rank and file? Are most of them Republicans living out in the suburbs? I mean, today it's difficult but we would have to go back into the fifties, or thirties and forties when I'm looking at it.

[03:10:41] **ARCHIE:** First of all, let me make something clear. I have been in disagreement with Bridges' economic policies for a long time. Let's get that clear; that's number one. A lot of the left has also been in disagreement for different reasons and based on different estimates. Number two, there is a strong core of militant people in practically every local of the ILWU. There are some exceptions.

[03:11:19] **HOWARD:** Militant as opposed to radical, you're making that distinction? Because we know it cuts both ways. Some of the most militant people in Local 10 are not always the most radical, politically. Right?

[03:11:35] **ARCHIE:** I'm thinking in terms of these people being progressive.

[03:11:41] **HOWARD:** That sort of skirts the issue in my opinion, doesn't it? See, when you say "progressive," when you say "radical"—

[03:11:48] **ARCHIE:** Why don't you ask me a question? Why don't you ask me a question?

[03:11:49] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[03:11:50] **ARCHIE:** Do you think the membership of ILWU is radical? Why don't you ask me that question?

[03:11:56] **HOWARD:** Archie Brown, do you think that the membership of the ILWU in the longshore division is more radical than other unions?

[03:12:05] **ARCHIE:** A large group of them are. I would say that the majority are probably the same. What leavens it, if that's the correct world, is this large group of radical people who has its effect on those who aren't as radical.

[03:12:24] **HOWARD:** I think that's a correct estimation, based on everything I've read. Now my question to you is, how large is that minority of radicals? Approximately? Are we talking about a nucleus of 100 people out of the entire coast? I guess we'd have to specify the time period. What about the fifties, as opposed to today? How big were people around the Party in Local 10? How many were there? That you would say are close to the Party? Without necessarily being members.

[03:13:01] **ARCHIE:** At times, we had as many as 300-400.

[03:13:06] **HOWARD:** Is that right? That's very—

[03:13:08] **ARCHIE:** Listen to me, listen to me. I'm not through. 300-400 subscribers to the People's World.

[03:13:16] **HOWARD:** That's quite sizable.

[03:13:18] **ARCHIE:** We had that many.

[03:13:20] **HOWARD:** That's out of a local membership of what, 3,000-4,000? Or, no, it was more than that, I guess, at its height, wasn't it?

[03:13:25] **ARCHIE:** I'm talking—here in the Bay area, there was probably 200. I'm talking coastwise.

[03:13:33] **HOWARD:** Okay, 300-400 coastwise.

[03:13:36] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, 400 coastwise subscribers to the People's World.

[03:13:40] **HOWARD:** Would it be possible to get access to party documents that have these kinds of statistics?

[03:13:45] **ARCHIE:** I doubt it.

[03:13:46] **HOWARD:** Really?

[03:13:47] **ARCHIE:** But you might get something in the PW, the People's World. I don't know how they break it down.

[03:13:57] **HOWARD:** I don't think it's by industry, unfortunately.

[03:14:01] **ARCHIE:** I think I'm making a good estimate. There was 300-400 people coastwise who subscribed to the People's World. We had that many.

[03:14:08] **HOWARD:** Okay. At what time, approximately?

[03:14:14] **ARCHIE:** Well, I would say probably the height of the war and even after until the Cold War started, until screening started. During that period.

[03:14:35] **HOWARD:** So this is World War II.

[03:14:36] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, yeah.

[03:14:45] **HOWARD:** That's 300-400 subscribers to the People's World—

[03:14:48] **ARCHIE:** Subscribed to the People's World. That's not how many we sold—

[03:14:50] **HOWARD:** Among longshoremen.

[03:14:51] **ARCHIE:** Among longshoremen, right, right.

[03:14:53] **HOWARD:** Okay. Well, I think that's a fairly significant evidence of some sort of radicalization going on.

[03:14:59] **ARCHIE:** Right, and they reflected other people, everybody who subscribed.

[03:15:05] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[03:15:06] **ARCHIE:** And, besides that, we had distributions and sales to people who didn't subscribe. I'm talking about subscribers to the People's World.

[03:15:18] **HOWARD:** You said it's unlikely I could get access to this. Is there anyone that I could bug about this information? Or would that just not be feasible at all?

[03:15:24] **ARCHIE:** I wouldn't try bugging the Party; I wouldn't try. All I would try—and like you said, you don't have it by industry, probably not—People's World. But, if they don't have it by industry, what good would that do you?

[03:15:36] **HOWARD:** It wouldn't do me any good. Because that stuff would be critical to the research. That's the kind of evidence I need to make a case that there was some kind of a radicalization process taking place on the West Coast. Or things like that.

[03:15:53] **ARCHIE:** Let's see. The local voted—this union voted—in 1961 to defend Archie Brown against the charges [*United States v. Brown*].<sup>4</sup> I don't know what that means. What does that mean?

[03:16:11] **HOWARD:** Could be civil liberties, right? I mean, it could just be a question of civil liberties, in which case, they're good Democrats.

[03:16:18] **ARCHIE:** Could be. A lot of good Democrats wouldn't vote for you, anyway.

[03:16:22] **HOWARD:** That's true.

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<sup>4</sup> In 1961, Archie Brown was charged with violating section 504 of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA), which banned communists from holding leadership positions in labor unions. He was sentenced to six months in prison. In 1965, the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the sentence and ruled that section 504 constituted a bill of attainder and was therefore unconstitutional.

[03:16:25] **ARCHIE:** I think that it is a reflection of the influence that the communists had over the years.

[03:16:37] **HOWARD:** Or maybe you were just a popular guy, despite your politics?

[03:16:45] **ARCHIE:** Hard worker. Good union man. But how can you separate—I don't know how could a person be a communist and not be a good union man? How is that possible?

[03:16:58] **HOWARD:** Well, let me put it to you this way. You could be a good union man without being a communist, right?

[03:17:02] **ARCHIE:** That's true.

[03:17:03] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[03:17:04] **ARCHIE:** But you raise a different question. You said—when I said, well, they voted for me. I was a communist, and they voted to defend me. You said, well, it might be civil liberties or just a popular guy. So I say to you, of course I was good union man. How could a communist not be a good union man? I don't know how you separate that.

[03:17:25] **HOWARD:** I've heard some nasty stories about the communists in the NMU being not very good union men, after the union was built. Essentially not caring for their responsibilities.

[03:17:34] **ARCHIE:** Maybe that was part of the reason they lost out. You know, I'm not going to say no. I'm not going to say no. Bunch of opportunists who joined the Party for opportunist reasons, or became opportunists later. I ran into some of them, sure.

[03:17:50] **HOWARD:** Okay, the final question I have, and then I will promise to leave, is—finally a smile!—was there any pattern—we've talked about this already. Just want to pull it all together. Was there any pattern to the basis of Bridges' support? In other words, in terms of generations within the union. Did the '34 men, for instance, offer a stronger basis of support for him than others? There appears to be a racial pattern, with Black people being more supportive of Bridges than white people. Ethnic splits, perhaps. There seems to be an industry split, insofar as Warehouse seems to be particularly loyal to Bridges. Or was, in the fifties. Hawaii seemed to be particularly loyal. That may be a racial thing again.

[03:18:42] **ARCHIE:** I'm not sure what you're getting at. Honest. I'm not sure.

[03:18:44] **HOWARD:** Okay, well, what I'm trying to do is—the research is designed to determine what are the conditions under which radical leadership is most durable. So, in order to do that, I'm trying to look at the ILWU and say, which groups within the ILWU were the strongest and most consistent supporters of Bridges? Well, let's break them down into various groups. There were Blacks and whites in the union. Were Blacks more supportive of Bridges?

[03:19:10] **ARCHIE:** I think, as a whole, the Blacks in greater percentages were more supportive of Bridges than the whites were. But I still don't know what that point is. The Blacks didn't elect Bridges; they couldn't have. They weren't even the swing vote of the total votes throughout the International, is what I'm talking about. I think Bridges' devotion to unionism, his fight against discrimination—whatever his mistakes were—won him the support certainly of the Black and brown people in Hawaii and here. No question about that.

I think that his general fight for union rights and for the conditions of the workers, by and large, the majority of the longshore supported him on that. You talked about Warehouse. I'm not really an expert on that. I think Warehouse did, too. But I think that's where it is. I think that there's a feeling, when the vote for it would come—of course, there was only one time that I know of any opposition to Bridges. One time that anybody ran against Bridges, and he got defeated just.

But the people come and vote; even though Bridges is the only candidate, they give him a big vote. They did. They gave him a big vote. They felt they had gained a lot in the ILWU, and Bridges was the ILWU in that sense. Whatever the ILWU stood for in the fight for democracy, in the fight against racism, the fight against discrimination, for higher wages and better conditions—they felt that Bridges represented that.

Now you raise—no. I'm going to leave that alone, unless you raise it again.

And, I think they voted for his integrity. We spoke of that before. They voted for his integrity. The fact he didn't hide how he felt about certain things and so on.

And they voted also, in my opinion, because many of them—I don't know what percentage—agreed with his position on various things. How, for example, if you thought about it, could you not agree with his position on peace?

[03:21:58] **HOWARD:** You could be a rabid anti-communist and argue that we have to arm ourselves to the teeth.

[03:22:02] **ARCHIE:** Alright, okay.

[03:22:04] **HOWARD:** Which seemed to be the norm during the fifties. I mean, the UE was turned out on those very issues. No one ever challenged the UE leadership, for instance, on its inability to deliver the goods. The IUE, [?Kerry?] and those people, never said that the UE couldn't deliver the goods. They just said that they were communists, and therefore they weren't worthy of the support of the working class.

[03:22:26] **ARCHIE:** I thought the IUE, you said before, was because the communists betrayed them during the war.

[03:22:31] **HOWARD:** Well, they did a combination of things. I don't know. At different points in time, they employed different arguments, obviously.

I mean, it's complex. There's no question about that.

[03:22:44] **ARCHIE:** You know what's complex? Everybody didn't agree with all the positions at the same time.

[03:22:50] **HOWARD:** Sure.

[03:22:51] **ARCHIE:** Even though they went along with it.

[03:22:52] **HOWARD:** Sure.

[03:22:53] **ARCHIE:** I don't know what happened during the war in the UE, but I know a lot of those people would never agree to those kind of statements. I know that.

[03:23:00] **HOWARD:** I know.

I know a lot of people didn't agree that certain locals of the UE joined the IUE because of unity in certain places. I know goddamn well they were very bitter about it. To this day they're bitter about it.

I know.

[03:23:24] **ARCHIE:** That's what makes it complex, huh?

[03:23:25] **HOWARD:** I know.

[03:23:31] **ARCHIE:** I'm of the opinion that the Communist Party in the United States has made a lot of errors. I think that, by and large, the overall record for the Communist Party has been one of, well, certainly loyalty to the working class people. I think that overall it has given fair to good leadership in connection with the unions. That's what it really gets down to. I know in these research papers, just like this guy you were talking about had me and Stack used as a basis for—what was it? What's his name?

[03:24:37] **HOWARD:** Cushman.

[03:24:38] **ARCHIE:** Cushman, yeah. Stack and I, he said, were part of the basis. . .

[03:24:43] **HOWARD:** Arguing about the Comintern dictating policy and stuff.

[03:24:46] **ARCHIE:** Oh yeah. Well, I went through that, about working class internationalism. I went through all of that.

[03:24:56] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[03:24:56] **ARCHIE:** I don't know what all else to say about that.

[03:24:59] **HOWARD:** No, I think that's a perfectly fair statement, and I basically agree with that. Particularly in certain areas, like in defending the rights of Black people and stuff like that, the party has an exemplary record. No one comes close in its consistency on that question. So, that seems very fair in retrospect.

Final question—is there anyone else that you could recommend that I could talk to? I'm only going to be here for a couple more weeks.

[03:25:23] **ARCHIE:** Well, you gotta talk to Walter.

[03:25:26] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I think I probably will if I can.

[03:25:28] **ARCHIE:** You must talk to Walter Stack.

[03:25:30] **HOWARD:** Which of the two, if I could only talk to one or the other—Bill Bailey or Walter?

[03:25:34] **ARCHIE:** Why can't you talk to them both?

[03:25:36] **HOWARD:** Question of time is my only problem.



[03:25:39] **ARCHIE:** Oh, I see.

[03:25:40] **HOWARD:** I'd love to. See, I've got to go—

[03:25:40] **ARCHIE:** Well, I don't know what to say. It's like chocolate or vanilla ice cream. [chuckles] I don't want to make it that simple.

[03:25:47] **HOWARD:** Walter never left the Party, did he?

[03:25:49] **ARCHIE:** No.

[03:25:50] **HOWARD:** How about Bailey?

[03:25:51] **ARCHIE:** He did. Walter never left the Party.

[03:25:56] **HOWARD:** Do you know when they came on? Bailey, I thought, was a longshoremen at some point. Is that true?

[03:26:01] **ARCHIE:** He was at some point. Sure, he went into the seamen. He got blacklisted, and then—I don't know if right away—but he became a longshoreman. When he retired, he was a longshoreman.

[03:26:12] **HOWARD:** He might be more valuable then, just because of that experience in the longshore, I don't know. Are they both in the city here, or do you know?

[03:26:19] **ARCHIE:** They're both in the city. But, you know, remember—you were talking about their experiences as seamen in MWIU—

[03:26:35] **HOWARD:** That's principally what I'm after.

[03:26:36] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, so I don't think that the fact that Bailey was a longshoreman would aid you in that respect.

[03:26:46] **HOWARD:** Okay, that's true.

[03:26:47] **ARCHIE:** So, suit yourself on that one.

[03:26:52] **HOWARD:** Are their numbers available in the phonebook, or do you know? I've got Walter Stack's. Ben—it's his brother-in-law.

[03:26:58] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, that's his brother-in-law.

[03:27:00] **HOWARD:** He gave me that.

[03:27:02] **ARCHIE:** Bailey lives on Telegraph Hill. Let's see if we can find him. I think he used to be on Telegraph. . .

[03:27:11] **HOWARD:** Let me see if I can stop.

[END PART SEVEN/BEGIN PART EIGHT]

[New interview begins]

Brown on 9/7/82. Okay, you may begin.

[03:27:33] **ARCHIE:** Well, you asked the question about where there was activity on the waterfront in the thirties. You have to include Seattle [Washington] . Oh yes. You know, it's hard to think back, but a number of the people who were active—and they also came to San Francisco later—started their activities in—I don't mean they started their activities, but were active in the early thirties in Seattle. If I'm not mistaken, one of them was Walter Stack.

[03:28:12] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I think he came out in '34, in the midst of the strike. But he wasn't there before that.

[03:28:17] **ARCHIE:** No, he was in Seattle.

[03:28:19] **HOWARD:** No, I don't think so.

[03:28:20] **ARCHIE:** Oh, I see.

[03:28:21] **HOWARD:** He said he was in Baltimore, and he came down in the middle of the strike. Because he'd been arrested, and he wanted to get out of the state, sort of a thing. He came in the middle of the strike, and he wasn't there beforehand.

[03:28:30] **ARCHIE:** I see, alright.

[03:28:31] **HOWARD:** But, you're right, '34 is still relatively early.

[03:28:34] **ARCHIE:** Right, right, now there's also a guy by the name of Burt Nelson.

[03:28:40] **HOWARD:** Tried to contact him.

[03:28:41] **ARCHIE:** Yeah?

[03:28:42] **HOWARD:** Do you know if he's still alive?

[03:28:43] **ARCHIE:** Oh yes. He's still alive.

[03:28:44] **HOWARD:** Because I called a Burt Nelson in Bellevue, Washington—same spelling, B-U-R-T. Picked up the phone and said, "Nuh-uh, I'm not the guy who was in the longshore industry."

[03:28:55] **ARCHIE:** That don't sound right. What town was that?

[03:28:58] **HOWARD:** Bellevue.

[03:28:58] **ARCHIE:** No, no. He's in Seattle, but now he's retired. He's got a houseboat out on one of those lakes.

[03:29:07] **HOWARD:** That's what Dorothy Healey told me.

[03:29:08] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, got a houseboat out on one of those lakes. I think it's still a section of Seattle; it may not be, but it's not far from Seattle. The way to locate him is, for sure, to go to the bookstore. Just leave word. They have a bookstore there.

[03:29:29] **HOWARD:** Oh, the radical bookstore in Seattle?

[03:29:32] **ARCHIE:** I forget the name, but it's in the weekend edition of the People's World. They list all the bookstores up and down the West Coast.

[03:29:39] **HOWARD:** You think he comes in there on a regular basis?

[03:29:41] **ARCHIE:** No, they would know. They may not give you an address, but they may say, "Alright, we'll contact him." I think that's the best way to do it.

[03:29:50] **HOWARD:** That's good to know.

[03:29:51] **ARCHIE:** I may look through my stuff and see if I've got him anyplace.

[03:29:58] **HOWARD:** That would be helpful.

[03:29:58] **ARCHIE:** But that's what I have to do.

[03:30:00] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[03:30:01] **ARCHIE:** And so, he was there early. I don't remember—wait a minute. There was a woman. What the heck's her name? She's here now. She came from Seattle. Damn it, I wish my wife was here. She'd know her name. But I don't know if she was connected with the waterfront—I just know she was active in the struggles in the early thirties.

[03:30:28] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you a question about that. The party seemed to be much more successful through the MWIU in San Francisco than in any other port on the West Coast. Is that correct? In the early days, '33-34 period.

[03:30:42] **ARCHIE:** I think that's correct.

[03:30:43] **HOWARD:** Okay. Why? Did they target San Francisco? Or is that just how things worked out?

[03:30:57] **ARCHIE:** People were assigned to work on the waterfront. Most of them were working on the waterfront; that is, they were shipping out. We had, in the beginning, few people as longshoremen. They came later, meaning maybe about '30-'31-'32. But the seamen had been sailing for some time. Jackson was one of them. Harry. He was one of them. He and—I forget these names.

[03:31:39] **HOWARD:** I know a lot of them now. There's a Hynes, Harry Hynes.

[03:31:43] **ARCHIE:** Harry Hynes, where is he?

[03:31:45] **HOWARD:** And Alexander.

[03:31:47] **ARCHIE:** Where is Harry Hynes?

[03:31:48] **HOWARD:** Today? I have no idea.

[03:31:50] **ARCHIE:** But there is also—

[03:31:56] **HOWARD:** Alexander?

[03:31:57] **ARCHIE:** No, no, his face is in front of me. It'll come later. A big, tall guy. He became a painter after he was blacklisted out of the waterfront. He was a painter, and he still is a painter, as far as I know.

[03:32:13] **HOWARD:** [?Winestock?] .

[03:32:15] **ARCHIE:** No, no. Here in San Francisco. I'll think of it. There's a name; it'll come. But, a lot of this stuff is vague in my head right now. But I remember Harry Jackson and this other guy—I think he started out on the East Coast, this big guy. The point I was trying to make is they were very energetic. Very devoted. Fearless, absolutely fearless. They went out and organized the ships. There were several ships. I don't have the names of the ships or all the incidents that occurred, but they would organize actions on these ships for food, lousy conditions, terrible food, terrible quarters, et cetera. They would organize these actions on the ships and win some of them, or get kicked off, or anyway. MWIU got known for these kind of actions, among the radicalized section of seamen who responded to the MWIU. I remember they established a headquarters here in San Francisco.

[03:33:33] **HOWARD:** A West Coast headquarters?

[03:33:34] **ARCHIE:** Oh, I don't know that, but a branch of the MWIU. You've heard that the vigilantes came and wrecked it.

[03:33:44] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[03:33:44] **ARCHIE:** Like they did with the other party headquarters.

[03:33:46] **HOWARD:** During '34, you mean?

[03:33:47] **ARCHIE:** Yeah. So I know they had a headquarters. A going concern. They actually had seamen who were shipping out who belonged to—

[03:33:56] **HOWARD:** Shipped out through the MWIU hall?

[03:33:58] **ARCHIE:** Well, no, no, I don't mean that. I mean they were seamen who were actually shipping, and not somebody who was just on the beach and stuff like that.

[03:34:12] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[03:34:12] **ARCHIE:** Although many more came from the beach because they couldn't get jobs and so on. There was an MW headquarters in San Francisco. In the beginning of the 1934 activities, the MWIU was very active and cooperated strongly with the longshoremen. Of course, when the strike was called, they made it their business to go to throughout the ships, contact the seamen, and try to pull them out on strike. You probably know that the seamen did not come out on strike right away for the longshoremen; they had to be pulled out. A lot of them. The MWIU was mainly responsible for that.

Then, after the strike—or maybe even sometimes during the strike, but it seems to me that it was after the strike—the MWIU decided that it was going to dissolve and go into the seamen’s union.

[03:35:11] **HOWARD:** Mm-hmm, that’s ‘35, yeah.

[03:35:12] **ARCHIE:** ‘35, I guess that’s right, after the strike.

[03:35:14] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you some questions leading up to this period because this is what I’ve been trying to work out. The government was interested in the same question, but I’m coming at it from a different angle. That’s the relationship between the party and Albion Hall faction in the ILA, the people around Bridges. The thing that I’m trying to figure out—let me run it down to you like this: in July of ‘33, the Waterfront Worker is telling people that they should stay, that they should affiliate with the MWIU. It’s the only legitimate union, and the ILA is composed of fakers. In Bridges’ testimony and other sources, he’s saying in ‘33 they formed Albion Hall. A number of people—Schomaker, people like that, open party members—are in Albion Hall. They’re clearly pushing for the members to join the ILA. So, in the month of 1933, you’ve got the Waterfront Worker saying join the MWIU, and you’ve got waterfront communists like Schomaker and others saying, let’s stay with Albion Hall, and push for the ILA.

[03:36:08] **ARCHIE:** ILA’s longshore. That’s seamen.

[03:36:08] **HOWARD:** Oh, so they were emphasizing seamen?

[03:36:12] **ARCHIE:** MWIU for seamen. ILA for the longshoremen.

[03:36:16] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[03:36:17] **ARCHIE:** Right, right.

[03:36:18] **HOWARD:** So they—

[03:36:20] **ARCHIE:** You know, I see what you’re driving at. Every once in a while, the MWIU would make noises about organizing the longshoremen, but they never did it successfully. Not as successfully as they did the seamen.

[03:36:32] **HOWARD:** Why was that?

[03:36:34] **ARCHIE:** Oh, I don’t know. I really don’t know. I think that the way that the longshoremen—I’m not speaking for other ports now—in San Francisco became involved is, again, that the Albion Hall group would organize job actions. Like I spoke about the seamen. They were successful, and they weren’t successful. But they got the name. Everybody, all the longshoremen, knew that’s the Albion Hall—whether they approved of them, or disapproved of them, or were scared of them, or whatever. “Yeah, that’s the Albion Hall group. They’re doing it.” Or, “That’s the communists,” or, “That’s the Reds,” or whatever they called them. Militants or whatever it was. The Waterfront Worker was very influential. We spoke about that part, how they put the stories in the Waterfront Worker, and so on and so forth. Everybody would buy that Waterfront Worker for 2¢. You couldn’t put out enough of them. Workers would buy them up right away. Then there were stories in the Waterfront Worker also about—now, the Waterfront Worker would also run stories about seamen’s actions. Of course, it was the MWIU that they were pushing because they were the ones that were carrying out the actions.

[03:38:12] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you a question about that. In Bridges' testimony, he says that early on, in 1933—I guess he credits the MWIU with initiating the Waterfront Worker. I think the first issue comes out in December '32. It's pretty clearly an MWIU publication apparently. Is that how you remember it?

[03:38:30] **ARCHIE:** Well, I'll tell you. I wasn't in on issuing the Waterfront Worker. I helped to distribute, sell it, and so on. I wasn't in on it. He may be right. My remembrance was that the MWIU would put out its own literature. Not a bulletin, but a leaflet, particularly about any particular job actions. I think the Waterfront Worker, you know, well, if Bridges says so, I guess he's right. It must have been taken over by longshoremen because, as I remember, the Waterfront Worker was mainly directed to longshoremen. But I could be mistaken.

[03:39:12] **HOWARD:** You're right, it was. Bridges says in July of '33, when Albion Hall is formed, that they take over the Waterfront Worker—or they share responsibilities with the MWIU. Then, by August or September, it's pretty much controlled by Albion Hall.

[03:39:24] **ARCHIE:** Then he's right.

[03:39:26] **HOWARD:** Yeah, okay. The sort of question I was getting at is—the party seemed to at that point have taken a stance of really trying to integrate themselves with the workers on the waterfront. For instance, not insisting that Schomaker head up the Albion Hall group. He was second in command.

[03:39:47] **ARCHIE:** Who was first in command?

[03:39:48] **HOWARD:** Bridges.

[03:39:48] **ARCHIE:** Oh, I see.

[03:39:49] **HOWARD:** He was pretty much the recognized leader. Schomaker took a subordinate role. My thesis is—let me tell you what I'm driving at. The thesis that I'm working with is that the reason the party was so successful in San Francisco and on the west coast in particular, compared to New York, is because they were really rooted here. That they had working longshoremen; that they made contact with guys like Bridges and others who had lots of experience and worked with them. Whereas in New York—you know Sam Madell? Does that name mean anything?

[03:40:18] **ARCHIE:** No, no.

[03:40:19] **HOWARD:** He's like a leading party functionary on the waterfront. He talks about himself being a plant; he talks in those terms, about how he was brought in to colonize the waterfront.

[03:40:30] **ARCHIE:** I don't know him.

[03:40:31] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[03:40:33] **ARCHIE:** I wouldn't know any of the early longshoremen there. The seamen were different because they were out in front, and their names were public and so on.

[03:40:45] **HOWARD:** Yeah, right, that's true. It was always sort of clandestine, the way they operated.

I guess what I'm after is—do you have any sense that, well, who were the people that were in the Albion Hall faction, do you know? Were they people who'd been longtime longshoremen? Or were they MWIU people? Or?

[03:41:06] **ARCHIE:** Let's see. The meetings that I took part in in connection with the Albion Hall were the kind of meetings where they invited people to come in. They weren't the core group. I never was with the core group in Albion Hall. But I attended I don't remember how many meetings in Albion Hall that had to do mainly with preparations, getting the material out, talking to the workers, helping to carry out the plans that had been made. I was never in on the making of the plans per se. Might have spoke up and said we ought to do this for the young people. I was in the Young Communist League at that time.

[03:41:54] **HOWARD:** Right. I saw all that stuff where you're running for office in '34. It's great.

[03:42:00] **ARCHIE:** We made a lot of contact with not so much longshoremen as we did seamen. We made a lot of contact with young seamen.

[03:42:07] **HOWARD:** Through Albion Hall?

[03:42:08] **ARCHIE:** No, no, Young Communist League.

[03:42:14] **HOWARD:** YCL, okay.

[03:42:15] **ARCHIE:** There was a connection with Albion Hall of course. We would have a program talking to—you have to have special demands for the young seamen. That was the Young Communist League's program. Like, young seamen when they became ordinary seamen. That's all. There was many of them that just shipped out just to bloody well eat. They got no pay. What do you call them? I want to say "ship-aways," but that's not it. There's a term for it. Been so long I've forgotten. They got them working for nothing! These are young kids, so we said we have to have special demands for them. That's what I raised, and other young people raised, whenever we met with the Albion Hall group. Which, I want you to understand, wasn't very often. We weren't part of the regular bunch who met with them. First of all, I wasn't working on the waterfront at the time. I was not a longshoreman or a seaman at the time.

[03:43:23] **HOWARD:** You were relatively young, right? Like in your late teens or something?

[03:43:25] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, right, I was about 18 or 19 years old. Maybe 20.

[03:43:33] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you this, then—which is really the focus of all these questions. If you're correct in assuming that the MWIU didn't have much of an impact on longshoremen in San Francisco prior to '34, correct?

[03:43:45] **ARCHIE:** I think that's correct.

[03:43:46] **HOWARD:** That seems to be my reading as well. How did guys like Schomaker, open communists, play such a prominent role in the formation of the ILA? He was publicity director during the '34 Strike and things like that.

Did communism have anything to do with it?

[03:44:06] **ARCHIE:** Say that again?

[03:44:06] **HOWARD:** Does party attachments have anything to do with it? In other words—

[03:44:10] **ARCHIE:** Oh, I think so.

[03:44:10] **HOWARD:** —was it just like, well, this guy's a militant. I don't care what he is. Or was it like, he's a part of this party who stands for our interests, and we follow him for that reason.

[03:44:18] **ARCHIE:** See, there were two people. I'm trying to remember the other guy's name besides Schomaker who was also known. Incidentally, I've never heard Schomaker, anybody, before '34 get up and say, "I'm a communist." I never heard that.

[03:44:38] **HOWARD:** You never heard that?

[03:44:39] **ARCHIE:** Never.

[03:44:40] **HOWARD:** He did in '34, though, didn't he?

[03:44:41] **ARCHIE:** I never heard it.

[03:44:42] **HOWARD:** The press reported he once said that. I don't know if it's true or not.

[03:44:45] **ARCHIE:** Well, maybe he did. Maybe I wasn't just around and don't remember the event. But everybody knew he was a communist; he did not deny it. It was him and—what is the other guy's name? There was a couple of them known as communists. See, Bridges was never known as a commie. You always imputed it, "He must be a commie."

[03:45:12] **HOWARD:** So there was somebody else besides Schomaker?

[03:45:13] **ARCHIE:** Oh yes. I gotta think who it is. Yes, there was, absolutely.

[03:45:20] **HOWARD:** That Henry Schrimpf character.

[03:45:22] **ARCHIE:** Henry Schrimpf.

[03:45:24] **HOWARD:** Dietrich?

[03:45:25] **ARCHIE:** No, Dietrich wasn't but there was Henry Schrimpf. There was Germain Bulcke. Neither of them—there was another guy, uh, who in the hell was it?

[03:45:37] **HOWARD:** Not Schmidt.

[03:45:38] **ARCHIE:** No, not Henry. Henry was not known as a communist.

[03:45:43] **HOWARD:** He wasn't?

[03:45:44] **ARCHIE:** Excuse me. Those early years, I'm talking about. Later on is a different story.

[03:45:51] **HOWARD:** Okay, yeah, yeah.

[03:45:51] **ARCHIE:** But there was another person—Jesus, who the hell was it?

[03:45:55] **HOWARD:** B.B. [Ben B.] Jones?

[03:45:56] **ARCHIE:** B.B. Jones! There you go! It was B.B.



[03:45:59] **HOWARD:** Is he still around, by the way?

[03:46:00] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, he's still around. He's retired, and he comes to the pensioners' meeting every once in a while.

[03:46:04] **HOWARD:** Does he?

[03:46:04] **ARCHIE:** Yeah. That's it. That's who! Those are the two.

[03:46:10] **HOWARD:** You said they were never actually open. You never heard Schomaker or B.B. Jones say, "I am a communist," in public.

[03:46:15] **ARCHIE:** I never heard it. If they did, I don't know when it happened. But, let me put something straight. Maybe those aren't the words, "putting something straight." Whenever we discussed the situation, whether it was in a union, in a strike, among the unemployed, anti-war movement, whatever it was, we in the Communist Party and the Young Communist League—our position was that it's not right, it's not good, to hide the face of the party and the Young Communist League. We're taking an active part here. Workers know it. Somebody's got to say they're communist. Otherwise it doesn't make a goddamn bit of sense. It could be—like with me, for sure, I spoke as a member of the Young Communist League. Everybody knew bloody well who I was. I was advertised in the election campaign; I was advertised every place as a communist. So there was no problem about that, about me being known as a communist. It just so happens that I can't remember any public declaration by B.B. or Schomaker saying, "Yeah, I'm a communist." I just don't remember that.

[03:47:46] **HOWARD:** But, as far as you know, most people related to them for all practical purposes as communists, right?

[03:47:52] **ARCHIE:** Oh yes.

[03:47:52] **HOWARD:** No question in anybody else's mind?

[03:47:54] **ARCHIE:** No, no.

[03:47:55] **HOWARD:** They never made any attempts to deny it?

[03:47:57] **ARCHIE:** Never made any attempts to deny it. As far as I know.

[03:48:00] **HOWARD:** Well, that's very significant, I think.

So, now what was—why did they follow a guy like—I mean, that was an elected position, publicity chairman of the strike, I think.

[03:48:09] **ARCHIE:** Say that again.

[03:48:10] **HOWARD:** The publicity chairman that Schomaker was during the strike was, I think, an elected position. If it wasn't, it had to be popularly supported by the rank and file.

[03:48:19] **ARCHIE:** Well, you know, they had a strike committee, right?

[03:48:22] **HOWARD:** Mm-hmm.

[03:48:24] **ARCHIE:** The strike committee, as far as I remember—not only in ‘34 but in every situation—elects their people. Chairpeople, publicity committee chairman, finance committee chairman, et cetera, et cetera. Particularly where more than one local union is involved, like it was in the strike, you cannot have an election in the rank and file that nominates all those because it overlaps. It’s several unions involved. So what you do, you vote to elect the strike committee. Now, in the locals—and I’m talking about a joint strike committee in this instance. The locals would elect their people. That they would do secret ballot or by hand or however they did it at the time. They would elect their people to the strike committee. Those were elected. Then that strike committee was authorized to select their executive committee; they were authorized to select their chairpeople, and so on and so forth. That’s the only way you could do it.

[03:49:33] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you this—did left-wingers predominate among the strike committee?

[03:49:41] **ARCHIE:** I think I told you in the previous interview that, while I picketed from May eighth I think the strike broke out to maybe the seventeenth or eighteenth, then I had to go to jail.

[03:49:57] **HOWARD:** Right.

[03:49:57] **ARCHIE:** I served in jail all during the bloody strike. The whole damn strike I was in jail!

[03:50:03] **HOWARD:** I know!

[03:50:05] **ARCHIE:** So, from personal experience, I cannot tell you.

[03:50:09] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[03:50:12] **ARCHIE:** From personal experience, that left-wingers were the predominant forces in the strike committee. I would say that, as I remember in the policies in the ILWU at the time, and all unions, was that the strike committees were not small. They were large. I presume that they had every kind of political and racial and ethnic representation on the strike committees. I think that’s what they strove for. I think that the people who are known as fighters, as militants, and who had led the struggles on the job were known; and they were the ones who got elected. Those who were, a number of them were party people. They were known from before, from the strike struggles. So, how many, to what extent, as individuals, the communists were predominant in the strike committee, I couldn’t say. What I suspect was it wasn’t a hell of a lot. What I think would have happened was they had all the influence. They influenced the strike committee.

[03:51:31] **HOWARD:** Okay. Now there was obviously—well, let me ask you if there was. There’s Schomaker and B.B. Jones who are pretty much the people most closely identified with the party.

[03:51:41] **ARCHIE:** Right.

[03:51:42] **HOWARD:** Then there must have been a buffer zone of people who were kind of close to it but they really never pegged them or something like that. Is that true?

[03:51:49] **ARCHIE:** I think that’s true. You know what those people would say? We had that also in the unemployed movement. We had that also in the peace movement and other places. They’d say, “Well, if fighting for a six-hour day, if fighting for higher wages is communist, I guess I’m a communist, too.”

[03:52:07] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[03:52:07] **ARCHIE:** “If fighting for unemployment insurance and relief for the unemployed is communist, I’m a communist, too.” You had a lot of people like that, who’d become radicalized and were no longer scared by this “Red” business and, as a matter of fact, fought back on the thing. “What are you talking about?” “You got anything better?” And so on. And admired the communists and the left-wingers generally for the stands they took and the fight they put up and the sacrifices they made.

[03:52:44] **HOWARD:** Okay, so I’m just trying to figure out—the MWIU doesn’t have much of an impact, but then, apparently, individual people close to the party, like the Schomakers, the B.B. Jones types, do have an impact through the Waterfront Worker. Is that right?

[03:53:01] **ARCHIE:** Wait, wait now. I’m a bit lost here.

[03:53:02] **HOWARD:** I’m trying to figure out. The party has, I think, real prevalent influence in both the maritime and the general strike in ‘34.

[03:53:10] **ARCHIE:** I think that’s true.

[03:53:11] **HOWARD:** Okay. The MWIU, as late as ‘32-’33, doesn’t have much of an impact on longshoremen.

[03:53:18] **ARCHIE:** I think that’s true.

[03:53:19] **HOWARD:** What happens between the middle of ‘33 and the outbreak of the strike in ‘34 to elevate communists to such a position of leadership?

[03:53:27] **ARCHIE:** Where, in longshore?

[03:53:28] **HOWARD:** Or influence. In longshore, yeah. That’s really what I’m looking at.

[03:53:32] **ARCHIE:** Oh, well, you’ve got to put everything together. Because the battles that the people in the MWIU led were also termed communist. Those kind of battles. “They’re trying to disrupt our industry, the waterfront industry, and they ought to be put in jail.” And so on and so forth. It didn’t make any difference whether they were communist or weren’t. As I explained before, many people said, “Well, if fighting for higher wages is communist, I guess I’m a communist.” Without being a member of the party at all. Without ever having joined the party. But have become radicalized, and followed the leadership of those who were communist. Because they figured that they know what they were doing; they were winning them higher wages and better conditions, so they went along with them.

I know your problem. Now I’m beginning to see your problem. You have to have lived that experience.

[03:54:36] **HOWARD:** I know. I didn’t. That’s the problem.

[03:54:38] **ARCHIE:** Many people don’t understand it because you don’t have quite the same thing today. It’s there, but in a different way. But in those days, even some radicals who weren’t members of the Communist Party—as a matter of fact, did not have a high regard for the Communist Party, but who would struggle—they, too, were termed communist. And, what are they going to say? “I’m not a communist; I’m a socialist.” Or, “I’m a Trotskyite.” Or I’m this, or I’m that. Well, there were groups, like among the Trotskyites, who took out after the Communist Party. No question about that. But there was many of them who didn’t necessarily agree with the communist program but who were termed communist who said, “To hell with you.” Or said, “If that means that I’m a fighter for the workers, guess I’m a communist.” As I tried to explain.

[03:55:51] **HOWARD:** Mm-hmm.

[03:55:52] **ARCHIE:** You have to understand that, first of all, large sections of the working people became radicalized. We had occasions, for example. Well, I stop now because you have to remember that there was all kinds of monkey business going on and also all kinds of provocateurs in the picture sent in by the police or the government or the Pinkertons, whoever it was. But we had people come to such places as the unemployed councils and say, “Where are the guns?” We said, “What the hell are you talking about?” “Well, are we going to make a revolution? Let’s go.” Some of it was provocation but some of it was for real. Some of it was for real. They were ready. Those people were ready. You have to understand, when whole families get kicked out—well, it’s beginning to happen now, too—of their homes—and in those days, there wasn’t unemployment relief. There wasn’t even a year’s unemployment. I mean, 26 weeks, let alone extensions.

[END PART EIGHT/BEGIN PART NINE]

If you lived in the city for a certain length of time, and you were arrested for et cetera, et cetera, they might give you a basket of groceries once in a while. Otherwise, nothing. Nothing! So the people said, “To hell with this. Richest country in the world. They’re poisoning oranges so you can’t eat them. They’re plowing under cotton; they’re plowing under pigs. What kind of nonsense is this? The communists are right.” A whole section of people traveling in that direction. Absolutely. FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] is what saved the capitalist system. Let’s get that clear. There was no real competition with the communists in those days. No real competition.

[03:58:05] **HOWARD:** You mean on the left?

[03:58:06] **ARCHIE:** On the left. There wasn’t any real competition. Like nowadays there is.

[03:58:12] **HOWARD:** It’s true. There wasn’t that sort of liberal stratum that could co-opt things so easily.

[03:58:15] **ARCHIE:** No. Didn’t know how, didn’t have the experience. The ones who were the organizers, the ones who had the theory, the ones who credibility were the communists. Or and those organizations and individuals who, while not communist—a lot of them said they weren’t communist—had a radical solution. Real radical solution. The goddamn press and the Senate and the President would say, “They’re communists anyway. We don’t care what they say. We don’t care what kind of communist they are.” So, the fighters became the communists. You have to understand this kind of a feeling. I would say that 20 percent of the population was like that. I think I’m being conservative. This 20 percent of the population was out in front; they were doing the fighting. The other 80 percent, or whatever percentage of workers it’s supposed to be, they looked on with approval.

[03:59:19] **HOWARD:** Okay, so then let me see if I’ve got this correct. Stop me if I’m wrong. Then the influence of the party happens like this: it isn’t so much—on the waterfront—through the instrumentality of the MWIU, at least for the longshoremen, but more through the activity of individuals in the Albion Hall group and this wider circle that sort of surrounds them of radicalization that’s taking place.

[03:59:44] **ARCHIE:** That’s pretty good, except one exception. It could be that in early days, in the early thirties, it was the MWIU people that did make the contact with the longshoremen.

[03:59:57] **HOWARD:** That’s what Bridges says in his interview. He talks about Darcy and Nate Branch coming down to the waterfront. Never heard of Nate Branch.

[04:00:04] **ARCHIE:** Is his name Nate?

[04:00:06] **HOWARD:** That's what the transcription. . .

[04:00:08] **ARCHIE:** Or something else. But I know Branch.

[04:00:09] **HOWARD:** Jim Branch! Jim Branch.

[04:00:11] **ARCHIE:** Right, oh yeah.

[04:00:11] **HOWARD:** Said Jim Branch was a very capable and articulate speaker.

[04:00:14] **ARCHIE:** Very capable.

[04:00:15] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I never heard of him until the testimony.

[04:00:18] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, I don't know what ever happened to him. I really don't know. They were very capable people. How they appeared on the waterfront, I don't know. We used to have meetings on the street corners. Get the shit beat out of us by the cops. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Some days they'd let us have it; some days they wouldn't. So we spoke to them. Unless they're talking about the street meetings, I don't know what they're talking about, Darcy and Branch. I don't know where they're supposed to have done this speaking. I just don't know.

[04:00:47] **HOWARD:** Down on the docks, he says.

[04:00:48] **ARCHIE:** Down on the docks? Well. See? There was, you might say, a three-pronged approach. The MWIU contacting longshoremen and—see, let's say a ship which is having an action is anchored out there, either at the dock or out in the bay. So the MWIU people go to the longshoremen and say, "Hey, we want your cooperation." So that's how they made contact with the longshoremen in the first place.

[04:01:15] **HOWARD:** Through job actions, then?

[04:01:16] **ARCHIE:** Through job action, right.

[04:01:18] **HOWARD:** Clever.

[04:01:20] **ARCHIE:** Then they involved those who were more conscious—more union-conscious or class-conscious.

[04:01:26] **HOWARD:** So that was the connection, then, through the MWIU. You think, to the extent that it was functioning on the waterfront for longshoremen, it was in support capacity for seamen.

[04:01:35] **ARCHIE:** That's originally. Then, now I suppose, when they got some longshoremen interested, they might have called them together and said, "Hey, you guys ought to do something for the longshoremen." You got a blue book"—you know what the blue book was?

[04:01:46] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[04:01:47] **ARCHIE:** “And you got a fink situation you guys ought to correct. What can you do about it? We got some people who may help you do it.” Then they call the communists in the meeting; they call Darcy in at that time. Or Jim Branch.

[04:01:59] **HOWARD:** Okay, that’s where the Waterfront Worker takes over, too, right?

[04:02:01] **ARCHIE:** That’s where the Waterfront Worker takes over, right.

[04:02:03] **HOWARD:** Okay, so I think I’m getting a better sense now. This is important because I could never get this straight.

Okay, let me ask you a couple of questions on also the period from ‘33-’37 in other ports. I’ll tell you what I know. I know that the MWIU had chapters also in San Pedro and in Seattle. I don’t know much more than that, to be honest. I know they were active with seamen in Seattle. I guess Burt Nelson worked with the longshoremen.

[04:02:33] **ARCHIE:** I guess.

[04:02:33] **HOWARD:** But I don’t know much more than that. I know during the strike in ‘34, the Pedro longshoremen voted an anti-communist resolution in the local. That’s about the extent of what I know outside of San Francisco. Can you add anything to that picture?

Basically the role of the MWIU or the CP during the ‘34 period.

[04:02:57] **ARCHIE:** The reason I went to jail—this might give you a clue—there was great spontaneity based on the radicalization of people. The reason I went to jail was because we went down to San Pedro to hold a meeting in the name of the Young Communist League. We had a meeting and dance—we always did that. Paid 15¢ to come in. That’s what you paid. So the Red Squad was active down there at the time, and the American Legion, of course. So we knew that they would put the pressure on to cancel the meeting, including getting the owners of the hall to cancel. Sure enough, they did. But we went up on them. When people came to the hall to go up to the meeting, which was drawn on our little leaflets—notice said, “Go to Hall so-and-so.” We rented another hall; they didn’t know. So we had it. The important thing is young seamen, longshoremen, fish cannery workers, fishermen, any and all of the groups where people work, they came. They came. This is a Young Communist League meeting. It’s also a dance and so on.

[04:04:19] **HOWARD:** Was it directed at waterfront workers? I guess it was if it—

[04:04:21] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yeah, definitely. We directed it directly to waterfront workers in San Pedro, young waterfront workers. Come carry on the revolution or whatever, see? By God, they came. I tell you this because, of course, I was arrested and so on, but—

[04:04:37] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you something. You just said something very revealing. You said, “Carry on the revolution.” What were you talking about? The MWIU—or the YCL, I guess, is what you were in—

[04:04:45] **ARCHIE:** I’m talking about the YCL.

[04:04:46] **HOWARD:** It was a very left line in those days, right?

[04:04:50] **ARCHIE:** We were ambivalent because we had a left line and we had a line of united front at the same time. We were learning, and it was always a struggle about how to apply the line, and so on. So we committed a lot of sectarian errors, but we also did a lot of good work as far as the united front was concerned. Putting forth the position of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League.

[04:05:26] **HOWARD:** You were very open about your position? It wasn't about reforming capitalism at all, right?

[04:05:30] **ARCHIE:** No, no, we wanted to supplant capitalism with a socialist ordered society.

[04:05:36] **HOWARD:** So, when it was a YCL-sponsored event, people knew those were the politics—

[04:05:41] **ARCHIE:** Well, how do we know if they knew? They just knew it was a radical thing, and, "This is the way we gotta go, and they're going to get us organized. They're gonna win us some wages, hours, and conditions."

[04:05:52] **HOWARD:** But it wasn't like the Popular Front period where there was some question of who was sponsoring an event, or what their politics were, or something like that. If it said "Young Communist League," in 1933—

[04:06:01] **ARCHIE:** The dance was sponsored by the Young Communist League.

[04:06:04] **HOWARD:** And it was directed at waterfront workers.

[04:06:05] **ARCHIE:** Waterfront workers—seamen, longshoremen, cannery workers. That's who came. You ought to see the bunch who came.

[04:06:15] **HOWARD:** How many people were there? Do you have any idea?

[04:06:17] **ARCHIE:** The damn hall was full, that's all I know. Maybe it held 250 people. Damn place was full. In walked the American Legion with little clubs, and the Red Squad. Well, we won't go into that, but, anyway, I tell you this because that was the kind of response. You just had to go speak to people, and, if they thought you had any kind of a program to get the hell out of the crisis, out of the terrible situation, they responded.

[04:06:49] **HOWARD:** Okay, that's just a problem then. Because you're suggesting, I guess, that there was quite a bit of support or sympathy among San Pedro's waterfront workers for YCL-type of positions.

[04:07:00] **ARCHIE:** For support against the establishment.

[04:07:06] **HOWARD:** Okay, then why did those same longshoremen in 1934 pass a resolution against the Communist Party and its interference in ILA affairs?

[04:07:14] **ARCHIE:** Because you have to, at that time, read all the newspapers and the pressure. And you have to know that J.P. Ryan, from the international, told them that, "We'll squash you, and you better get rid of these commies." They thought, not being versed and solid in class struggle, well, "Suppose we do pass a resolution condemning the communists. That won't hurt us. That won't hurt our fight."

[04:07:53] **HOWARD:** It's true, I never thought of that.

[04:07:54] **ARCHIE:** They passed a resolution here in San Francisco one time along the same lines. It said, “We want to get rid of the communists.” They passed it.

[04:08:06] **HOWARD:** When was this? In the fifties or something?

[04:08:09] **ARCHIE:** No, no, in the early days, in ‘34. During the strike.

[04:08:14] **HOWARD:** The SF local did this?

[04:08:16] **ARCHIE:** Of ILA, you’re damn right they did. Did you not know that?

[04:08:19] **HOWARD:** No, I never heard that.

[04:08:21] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yes, it’s in the minutes. So then they said, “Okay, who do we start with? Schomaker? The hell you talking about? We’re not going to kick out Schomaker. You got to be out of your mind! So the whole thing died. The whole bloody thing died.

[04:08:35] **HOWARD:** [laughs] Why don’t you tell me about that story? That sounds interesting. Can you elaborate that at all?

[04:08:39] **ARCHIE:** I can’t do much more than what I told you know. Besides Schomaker, there was B.B. Jones. There was several others who weren’t communists who were named. Because you must not think for a minute that there wasn’t any conservatives or right-wingers that were pulled together. I don’t know where they got their money, and so on and so forth. Maybe they were just absolutely honest and so on, and this was their belief. Of course, I think at least the leadership of it was put together by somebody on the outside who was giving them some guidance. That’s what I think. We had a group in there who brought in this resolution. It’s such an anti-communist drive. Horrible!

[04:09:31] **HOWARD:** When about was this? In the middle of the strike literally?

[04:09:33] **ARCHIE:** Well, about the time when the raids took place.

[04:09:37] **HOWARD:** Okay, that’s near the end of the strike, then, I think.

[04:09:39] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, towards the end of the strike. Right. When the raids took place. Jesus, there was this whole terror business, and people were upset. So they said, “Well, the union’s alright. If they want us to get rid of the communists, we’ll get rid of the communists.” But then, when it got down to the nitty-gritty, and kicking out B.B. Jones and [?Slim Molen?] .

[04:10:03] **HOWARD:** Oh, I’ve heard that name.

[04:10:04] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, Slim Molen was another one. Kicking those guys—you must be crazy! What are you guys talking about? We won’t kick them out.

[04:10:12] **HOWARD:** That’s interesting. So it was pretty much to appease the public, it sounds like, right?

[04:10:16] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, to get those bastards off their back! Since it was—they thought—might be interfering with the strike, and the success of the strike, “So, what the hell? So we’re against communism, big deal.”



You've got to understand that during these kinds of periods, people are in flux. They go back and forward. If the pressure is on, and they've never been communist and they've not been communist supporters for any length of time, they say, well, you know, take the easiest way out. They're not able to think it through. Those who are able to think it through fight against it. Many, many of the longshoremen and seamen and other waterfront workers said, "Don't fall for this bullshit of red-baiting." You read the Waterfront Worker during that period of time, that gives you an idea. But you also gotta read the Examiner at that time and the Daily News [San Francisco] at that time and the San Francisco Call Bulletin at that time. Oh, man! I'll tell you.

[04:11:20] **HOWARD:** Yeah. The papers in Pedro, incidentally, were just outrageous. The L.A. Times was just incredible.

[04:11:25] **ARCHIE:** Oh yeah.

[04:11:26] **HOWARD:** The stance they took. What about the Northwest? Do you know what kind of activities were going on up there during the strike?

[04:11:32] **ARCHIE:** I really don't. I remember—no I shouldn't even say I remember—except I do remember that people from Seattle would tell me about, and then it wouldn't register. There was no reason for me to remember. I know some activities were going on.

[04:11:52] **HOWARD:** Was Burt Nelson there during '34, or do you know?

[04:11:54] **ARCHIE:** I think so. I think Burt was there.

[04:11:56] **HOWARD:** I know he was there in '37. He played a real prominent role in the Voice. He was a correspondent for the Voice.

[04:12:01] **ARCHIE:** That's right, I think he was there in '34.

[04:12:04] **HOWARD:** Okay. I should try and talk with him then.

Okay, so that I think covers pretty much what I wanted to know for '34. Now, I'd sent you this letter. I was just reading off of it—the attached letter from the Voice of the Federation. It was written in March 1938. He claimed someone—I don't remember his name exactly—he claimed that he had attended a waterfront section meeting of the Party recently where there were 500 members present in San Francisco. Waterfront section of the Party.

[04:12:35] **ARCHIE:** Who's testifying? Who's this?

[04:12:36] **HOWARD:** This isn't a testimony; this is someone writing into the Voice of the Federation.

[04:12:39] **ARCHIE:** Oh, oh.

[04:12:41] **HOWARD:** He's just writing in a letter, and he says he's quitting the communist party. It's unclear what's going on.

[04:12:45] **ARCHIE:** What's his name?

[04:12:46] **HOWARD:** It doesn't have it. I gave the letter to you—you don't happen to have it, do you? It was attached to this. This is a Xeroxed copy. It's a name that's real similar—it isn't Lundeborg—who's the guy who

was the editor? Mays. It was some Mays, but it wasn't Barney. Some other Mays. He writes in, and the letter's titled, "Quits Communist Party." That's when it was under the Trotskyists' control, so they titled the things the way they wanted to. He writes in, and he's saying that he attended a meeting, and he tried to get up and talk about the party's rectification movement in 1937 on some specific issue. The thing that intrigued me is that he made reference to the fact that there were 500 people there at the waterfront section meeting in San Francisco. I almost fell off my chair when I read that.

[04:13:32] **ARCHIE:** '37?

[04:13:33] **HOWARD:** This was '38, March '38.

[04:13:35] **ARCHIE:** March '38 I was in Spain.

[04:13:37] **HOWARD:** Hmm. [chuckle] Does that seem plausible?

[04:13:42] **ARCHIE:** Well, it's plausible only from—excuse me. I don't know what he has in mind. We would call public meetings sometimes.

[04:13:54] **HOWARD:** I think that's what it was. The NMU did that, too, and they'd get 500 guys out sometimes.

[04:13:59] **ARCHIE:** But, I mean, the waterfront section of the party and the Young Communist League could have called a meeting asking people to come and had that kind of influence during those days. Maybe it was on—I don't know what it's for, but he talks about the rectification. You know, a lot of these people, they themselves are confused and really don't know the Party procedures. Honestly. Besides trying to screw up. It could be that he, here in a mass meeting where inter-Party stuff isn't the thing, he gets up and talks about inter-Party stuff. Could be.

[04:14:35] **HOWARD:** Yeah, okay.

[04:14:35] **ARCHIE:** But I can't think of a Party section meeting—maybe it was in those days. How the hell do I know? I wasn't here.

[04:14:43] **HOWARD:** You mean it's conceivable that there could be 500 members of the Party on the waterfront?

[04:14:48] **ARCHIE:** Let me think.

[04:14:50] **HOWARD:** Because that was the next question I was going to ask you. What would you estimate the relative number of either members or supporters in the various locals on the West Coast?

[04:14:58] **ARCHIE:** You know, at a certain time—I forget just what time it was—the Young Communist League had over 100 members on the San Francisco waterfront.

[04:15:07] **HOWARD:** On the waterfront alone?

[04:15:09] **ARCHIE:** Just the waterfront branch of the Young Communist League.

[04:15:11] **HOWARD:** 100 young sailor, seamen, longshoremen?

[04:15:13] **ARCHIE:** Longshoremen, seamen, scalers, fishermen, cannery workers—who else would be involved? Bargemen.

[04:15:24] **HOWARD:** It had to be before '35, right? Because it dissolves in '35, doesn't it? The YCL? Or does it keep functioning?

[04:15:31] **ARCHIE:** Wait, wait, wait. '35 it wasn't dissolved, no, later.

[04:15:35] **HOWARD:** Well, it's moving into the Popular Front period. You're going to have the Young Communist League around? I mean, I'm guessing—

[04:15:44] **ARCHIE:** It would have to be—you see there was a big problem there because I'm in jail—well, it was for 80 days. 80 days, that'd be December, November, October—that would have covered it. So, it could be '35 before October. Because I was in jail from October through towards the end of December.

[04:16:13] **HOWARD:** Was the YCL functioning when you got out of jail?

[04:16:14] **ARCHIE:** Yes.

[04:16:15] **HOWARD:** So it was still around in the early part of '35 at least, right?

[04:16:18] **ARCHIE:** Early part of '36. I was in jail in '35.

[04:16:21] **HOWARD:** Oh, '35 you were in jail.

[04:16:22] **ARCHIE:** Yes, I told you.

[04:16:23] **HOWARD:** Yeah, the end of '34 is when—okay, that's right.

So, anyway, there were over 100 waterfront workers in San Francisco.

[04:16:30] **ARCHIE:** Young people, members of the Young Communist League, and I don't know what the party had. I really don't know. I wouldn't be surprised if they had over 500 people. Like a revolving door, people came in and out.

[04:16:43] **HOWARD:** That's a real substantial base.

[04:16:45] **ARCHIE:** Goddamn right, it's a real substantial base. And they had a hell of a time trying to knock it down. Finally, over the years, but—

[04:16:53] **HOWARD:** What would you—

[04:16:53] **ARCHIE:** I'm not surprised, but—

[04:16:54] **HOWARD:** —this calls for pure speculation on your part, but since I don't have anything else to go on—what about the relative number of people in the various other ports? Pedro, Seattle, Portland [Oregon] . I know it's smaller.

[04:17:06] **ARCHIE:** Jesus, I don't know. Of course it would be smaller. I don't know how to gage it. I just don't know how to gage it because, you know, I wasn't in on the inner circle that had to do with it. If you would speak about the Young Communist League, I would know something about that in the early days. Like when I went down to Pedro, the Young Communist League in Los Angeles, they were quite large.

[04:17:35] **HOWARD:** On the waterfront, too? Do you remember that?

[04:17:38] **ARCHIE:** No, on the waterfront, I think we, well, we had the meeting there. I don't think there was too much on the waterfront before we went down and had that meeting. Then, of course, I went to the clink. Well, first I went back to Oakland where I was living. Then, when the court ruled, when I lost my case, I had to go to jail.

[04:17:59] **HOWARD:** So you had two beef going on at that time, didn't you? You had the one with this thing down here in Pedro, and then you had the ship scalers' thing up here.

[04:18:08] **ARCHIE:** Well, the ship scalers' didn't begin until—well, they struck in '34 with everybody else, and it wasn't settled. They kept on strike. Everybody else settled except the scalers.

[04:18:29] **HOWARD:** Okay, so let me see, then. Oh, I know one—let me just read it to you. We can go that way. Foster, serving recent communist trade union work, wrote in the 1939 issue of Political Affairs that the party “has liquidated its own communist fractions, discontinued its shop papers, and is now modifying its system of industrial branches. Communists function in the trade unions solely through the regular committees and institutions of the movement.” And then I ask you, “Do you remember anything like this taking place in Local 10? If so, with what consequences?” Et cetera, et cetera. In other words, in '38-39, they dissolve. Remember, the party becomes Communist Political Association. They dissolve their shop committees.

[04:19:15] **ARCHIE:** No, the party didn't become the Political Association until the war broke out.

[04:19:24] **HOWARD:** Okay, then this is taking place before; that's right. Okay, in September '39, they're anticipating—apparently—and they're dissolving their communist factions within the labor movement.

[04:19:34] **ARCHIE:** In '39, right?

[04:19:35] **HOWARD:** Yeah, that's what it says. September '39.

[04:19:37] **ARCHIE:** When's this guy writing his letter?

[04:19:39] **HOWARD:** The letter is earlier on, in March '38.

[04:19:42] **ARCHIE:** March '38, the discussion is going on. There's a lot of opposition to it, I know that. I mean there was a lot of discussion and a lot of opposition to dissolving the Communist Party clubs in industry—one of the biggest mistakes we ever made.

[04:20:03] **HOWARD:** You think so?

[04:20:04] **ARCHIE:** Oh, sure. Disaster.

[04:20:07] **HOWARD:** Why?

[04:20:08] **ARCHIE:** Because it helped to weaken the leadership in those industries and immobilize the rank and file. The impetus kept going so that even without clubs, people did their job and did their work done but after a while it told because there's no direction. Insufficient direction. [phone rings]

The activity that resulted in the great '34 Strike and March Inland and whole business of rebuilding the labor movement—a lot of it was due to communists being present in the industry. Or having this connection with it. And having clubs and organizations there dealing with the workers' problems but having its presence there. They didn't only—well, sometimes mistakes were made—but they didn't only deal with the economic problems. They deal with the political situation, too, and had a duty of transmitting and interpreting the political situation to the workers in the industry as well as fighting on the economic front. That was their job. When they were dissolved, this was part of the opportunism as reflected by Browder and that whole bit that the party went into when they went into the Communist Political League, what-the-hell-ever they called it. What did they call it?

[04:22:07] **HOWARD:** Communist Political Association.

[04:22:09] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, Communist Political Association, CPA, right.

[04:22:13] **HOWARD:** So you're saying that it did minimize the Party's influence? It sounds like it minimized it politically more than anything else. [sound of water running] In other words, you're in a trade union, which is primarily an economic organization. Communists can still carry out their trade union functions but less so their political—it was more difficult to raise political questions. Is that possible? Or it would just cripple the Party all across the board?

[04:22:39] **ARCHIE:** Over the period of time, the lack of communist presence in the form of clubs, or whatever kind of communist organization, in those industries certainly was a big factor in weakening communist influence. Also, how shall I say it?

Let's put it this way. What was the [Joseph] McCarthy drive all about? McCarthy drive was out to go after the people's movement and certainly the labor movement. They wanted to tame it. One of the factors of taming the labor movement was getting rid of the militants. Numero uno, the communists. Eh? Well, they succeeded in doing it. To the extent they succeeded in doing it, they tamed the labor movement. The conditions and the ability for the workers to struggle in those industries was weakened. Now, you know, just take a look at what happened in various industries. You go outside of the San Francisco waterfront, or you look at all the other industries—you can see what happened to the conditions and situation with the workers in the unions.

[04:24:01] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you concretely about Local 10. Can you think of any instances where it might have weakened your influence, other people around you, in the local? The dissolution of the clubs?

How many people were in the clubs to begin with? Do you remember that?

[04:24:15] **ARCHIE:** No. I don't remember. I told you about the Young Communist League. You see, the longshoremen had a particular situation that very few other industries had. That was, the education that they received through the strikes and because the communists were there to interpret it, to lead it. That stayed with them. So that they continued to elect militants and communists to various leading bodies.

It was precisely this kind of a situation, where—how shall I say it? I think it applied—no, I don't want to use the word “applied.” Those who were saying that it's time to change and dissolve the communist organizations in

the industry had the longshore situation in mind because there the workers were educated and knowledgeable enough to handle the situation.

[speaking to wife]

Came a new generation, came influx of new workers who didn't have the history. Then that wasn't [thumping for emphasis] in operation so much anymore, the radicalization and knowledge, and so on.

[04:26:38] **HOWARD:** So then, could I read into this that the workers who came in during the war were less exposed to radical influences?

[04:26:45] **ARCHIE:** Oh, yes, you can read that.

[04:26:45] **HOWARD:** And constituted the conservative elements in the unions?

[04:26:49] **ARCHIE:** Mm, after a while they did.

[END PART NINE/BEGIN PART TEN]

What was your question?

[04:27:18] **HOWARD:** I was going to ask you about the series of anti-fascist demonstrations that took place on the waterfront during '36-37. They'd bring in German and Italian ships, and the men would conduct demonstrations and things like that. If we assume it was an anti-fascist consciousness, which it probably was, what did these guys think when the Stalin-Hitler Pact<sup>5</sup> was initiated?

[04:27:41] **ARCHIE:** Well, there was great shock among many of them.

[04:27:52] **HOWARD:** How did you feel personally about that?

[04:27:59] **ARCHIE:** I had personal experience where we got sold down the river by England, the United States, and France when we were in Spain. We were prepared because we knew that the Soviet Union had warned—not only warned, but was calling for a world front against Nazism. To boycott Nazism. In particular on the question of Spain, we had the experience. So many of our guys got killed because of the treacherous action on the part of [Neville] Chamberlain, and even [Léon] Blum, the Socialist in France, and the other capitalist countries in connection with Spain. So, when Stalin said we're not going to pull their chestnuts out of the fire, not to pull Blum's goddamn chestnuts out of the fire, I was prepared for that. I was prepared for that. I wasn't sure, you know. I also had confusion about where do we go from here. That was unclear. You had sort of a faith. Up till now, we've had the answers, and the answer will develop. We'll see what happens, and this was a phony war. Got no business being in on it. I was convinced of that.

[04:29:38] **HOWARD:** Okay, in your case, I can understand. How about guys who were, you know, sympathetic to the party but not members? The Stalin-Hitler thing comes down. What do they think?

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<sup>5</sup> The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a treaty of nonaggression signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in August 1939. The treaty included a secret provision to partition countries in Central and Eastern Europe into German and Soviet "spheres of influence." The pact was terminated in June 1941 when Germany launched an invasion of the Soviet Union.

[04:29:47] **ARCHIE:** Alright, now, first you asked me about my own personal feelings. Well, I think there was much more confusion among them, absolutely. I don't know that it made enemies of former friends, necessarily. It was one of the things that maybe they just stored, was built up for later residue with other anti-communist propaganda. A lot of this harm was wiped out during the war.

[04:30:24] **HOWARD:** You've still got about three years in there before the war starts.

[04:30:27] **ARCHIE:** No, was it three years?

[04:30:29] **HOWARD:** Well, when was it? '38-39?

[04:30:32] **ARCHIE:** Let's think. Hitler moved—after the Spanish Civil War, you wanted to move us—

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE, PRESUMED TO BE ESTHER, ARCHIE'S WIFE: You didn't even come home until '38.

That's right.

[04:30:50] **HOWARD:** You know when the Stalin-Hitler pact was authored? We're just trying to figure out the timing here.

[04:30:57] **ARCHIE:** Well, it had to do first with the march on Austria and the betrayal there. Then they moved, not on France, well, part of—

[04:31:12] **HOWARD:** Poland, or?

[04:31:13] **ARCHIE:** No, no. Well, yeah, then Poland, but on Alsace-Lorraine. Where else did they move? Several places before they finally declared war on Poland.

[04:31:28] **HOWARD:** Okay.

[04:31:29] **ARCHIE:** So, that was after I came home.

[04:31:33] **HOWARD:** Well, in any event, there had to be two years in there, two critical years, where the party had been in the leadership of this anti-fascist struggle. People could easily organize around that. Then they authored this thing with Hitler. That must have been very disorienting.

[04:31:46] **ARCHIE:** It was. I don't deny that. Many people were disoriented. What I'm saying to you is that a number of things happened in between. The Finnish-Soviet war was also disorienting, with old Anna Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt's daughter] out there, hollering and yapping about it and condemning the Soviet Union and poor little Finland, and so on. It's also disorienting.

[04:32:21] **HOWARD:** Can you think of any instances in Local 10 where people got up on the floor of meetings or confronted you personally?

[04:32:27] **ARCHIE:** I had several people confront me personally. There was attempts to do it on the floor, but I don't any of us—

[04:32:33] **HOWARD:** Over this specific issue?

[04:32:35] **ARCHIE:** On the Soviet-Hitler Pact and Poland, yes. Oh yes.

[04:32:39] **HOWARD:** So there was quite a bit of—

[04:32:41] **ARCHIE:** I don't know about the "quite a bit" part, but several people came to me and said, "How do you account for it? What do you think about?" And so on and so forth. We had to have discussions about the thing. I told them what I just told you generally speaking. I told them my experience. At that time, I said, "You know, they're just trying to get us in the goddamn war on who gets the spoils. Well, the hell with that!" It wasn't until after Japan attacked the United States—no, first Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, didn't he?

[04:33:18] **ESTHER:** In June. And in December.

[04:33:19] **ARCHIE:** It wasn't until after that. These things sort of faded into the background. About Hitler-Soviet Pact, and the Finnish-Soviet deal sort of faded into the background. Everybody was set to fight against Hitler.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE, POSSIBLY ESTHER: [reading] "Hitler signed the non-aggression pact with the Russians on August 23, 1939."

[04:33:47] **HOWARD:** So there's only about a year and a half, I guess, in there between that and U.S. entry into the war.

[04:33:52] **ARCHIE:** Yeah.

[04:33:53] **HOWARD:** Less than that. 15 months or so.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE, POSSIBLY ESTHER: [reading] "He took his first step towards conquest by annexing Austria in March 13 of '38. A year later, he occupied Czechoslovakia, breaking the promises of the Munich Agreement."

[04:34:04] **ARCHIE:** That's it.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE, POSSIBLY ESTHER: [reading] "March 22, '39 he seized minimal lands from Lithuania and a month later denounced his '35 agreement with Britain and his non-aggression pact with Poland. On May 22, he signed a 10 year military alliance with Italy, and, on August 23, he agreed to the non-aggression pact with the Russians."

[04:34:23] **HOWARD:** Okay, alright, so I think I got that story straight. The last set of questions I just wanted to ask you kind of goes back into time a little bit. Okay, let me just read it to you; it's probably the easiest way here. "Near the end of 1935, the Waterfront Worker begins urging the men to practice greater restraint in the use of job actions." We talked about that.

[04:34:47] **ARCHIE:** End of '35, yeah.

[04:34:48] **HOWARD:** "By the middle of '36, the business press is praising Bridges for instilling discipline on the docks. We've already discussed the reasons for this caution, but now I wanted to ask you the consequences it had for the party. Did the party's prestige increase or decline as a result of this more cautious policy?"



[04:35:09] **ARCHIE:** I think that it gave the anti-communist groups in the left more of a handle than anything else.

[04:35:30] **HOWARD:** Who are you referring to?

[04:35:31] **ARCHIE:** Well, I forget who was around at the time, whether it was the Trotskyites or whoever it was. I don't mean that they were there in big force, but it gave them a handle to say, "You see? This is a sell-out on the part of the communists. They're not going to fight anymore." Then they say, "We don't think they ever really fought." That was them. "They're not going to fight anymore." I don't mean by that that large sections of workers agreed with them. I don't mean that at all. But, you know, it laid a residue basis for later on to make a case, if you want to call it that, as they played their disruptive roles.

Now, as far as the workers were concerned, you know, what it got down to was very practical matters. Like, how big should the sling load be? That's what we fought around. Even on into the war, there was a battle about the sling load size, particularly on cement, where the arbitrator [?Illio?] ruled that we raise it from 18 to 21 sacks. We told him to go hell—Bridges told him to, right during the war. Nothing doing. That's where B.B. and Schomaker broke with Bridges.

[04:37:06] **HOWARD:** Oh, is that right?

[04:37:06] **ARCHIE:** That's right. They said, "If you read Browder, this is what we gotta do to help win the war."

[04:37:14] **HOWARD:** I heard just the opposite on them, that they broke because they objected to the party's collaboration during the war, with—

[04:37:23] **ARCHIE:** Bullshit. Biggest bunch of bullshit I ever heard in my life.

[04:37:25] **HOWARD:** No? Is that right?

[04:37:26] **ARCHIE:** Yeah. Hey, I was there.

[04:37:28] **HOWARD:** I know.

[04:37:28] **ARCHIE:** I was there. Then I went into the Army, but I was there.

[04:37:32] **HOWARD:** So they were real Browderites.

[04:37:34] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, yeah!

[04:37:36] **HOWARD:** That's why they broke later on then.

[04:37:36] **ARCHIE:** Well, now, wait, wait. I don't know what kind of Browderites they were later on. I'm not talking about that. Maybe that, too. But, on this specific issue, they got up in this big membership meeting of ours and spoke against the action on the part of Bridges and the others on the cement question and Illio raising the load from 18 to 21 sacks.

[04:38:08] **HOWARD:** What did you do? What was your position?

[04:38:11] **ARCHIE:** My position was to back Bridges, absolutely. Our position was—

[04:38:15] **HOWARD:** Are you under the discipline of the Party or what?

[04:38:18] **ARCHIE:** Say that again.

[04:38:18] **HOWARD:** You're under the discipline of the party, right?

[04:38:22] **ARCHIE:** I'll tell you, life is funny. You can draft all the resolutions you want. Comes down to nitty-gritty, we ain't going to go for this bullshit of raising the sling load. First of all, it ain't true that that's what's going to win the war, eh? It's bullshit.

[04:38:44] **HOWARD:** Were B.B. Jones and Schomaker in the party during the war? When they stood up on the floor?

[04:38:49] **ARCHIE:** They were then.

[04:38:51] **HOWARD:** So they're taking one line, and you're in the party and you're taking another line.

[04:38:55] **ARCHIE:** There was a fight about the Browder line. It wasn't easy. It wasn't clear.

[04:39:00] **HOWARD:** So the party's not even monolithic in Local 10. It's factorized, well, it was at times.

[04:39:05] **ARCHIE:** Well, so a couple people—it depends what you're saying. Our understanding of what the Browder line meant was not that we increase 18 to 21 sacks. That wasn't our understanding. That was B.B. Jones' and Schomaker's understanding. So you got two people split with the rest of the party? I'm not saying it didn't influence anybody else. I'm not saying that. That was a struggle, but they got defeated in it.

[04:39:38] **HOWARD:** That's real interesting. Because the normal caricature that you get of the party is that it's a very monolithic machine that just steamrolls its way into the meetings. Obviously isn't the case.

[04:39:48] **ARCHIE:** Some people would like it to be like that, to interpret it that way. Then, of course, the party had some hassle with Jones and Schomaker later on. That was really the beginning of the thing as far as Schomaker was concerned, if you want my opinion.

[04:40:07] **HOWARD:** You don't know where he is, do you?

[04:40:10] **ARCHIE:** Is he dead, hon?

[04:40:10] **ESTHER:** I don't know.

[04:40:12] **HOWARD:** Someone said he was up in the gold country, but I don't know. I couldn't locate him, though.

[04:40:15] **ARCHIE:** I think he died.

[04:40:16] **HOWARD:** Oh. Let me just ask you one more question about this movement away from job actions after '35. You said it gave the non-CP left added credibility. Was that all there was to it?

[04:40:30] **ARCHIE:** Well, first, I didn't say it gave them added credibility. I said it gave them a handle. That's different.

[04:40:37] **HOWARD:** So the question is, was that all it was limited to, or did rank and file militants of whatever political complexion say, "Yeah, these guys are selling us out. You know, they talk a tough line until Browder comes back from Moscow, and now they're going to dictate to us on the waterfront."

[04:41:02] **ARCHIE:** I'm trying to think of how to give an intelligent answer to that question. There was undoubtedly people who lost faith, if you want, in the party leaders and stuff like that. See, outside of a few of the right wing, if you want, there wasn't anybody else to turn to at that time. There was no real threat from these Trotskyites. They were there, but there was no real threat. It just gave them a better handle, like I said before. I think that there was a lot of grumbling, if I remember right, on the part of the workers, not what the party did—they didn't even know. They didn't know; it wasn't published so that everybody understands what the party did.

[04:42:11] **HOWARD:** Was it reflected in practice on the docks? Were you guys discouraging people from taking job actions? I mean, that's the crucial issue, obviously.

[04:42:20] **ARCHIE:** The Party was discouraging people from taking job actions, oh yes.

[04:42:25] **HOWARD:** So what would you do? You're in the Party, you're on the waterfront, and these guys say, "Come on, Archie, let's not take this load. It's too big." What do you say?

[04:42:33] **ARCHIE:** I'm trying to remember a specific action.

[04:42:36] **HOWARD:** OK.

[04:42:37] **ARCHIE:** I'm just trying to remember what the score was. See, I think that—I don't remember a specific action like that. I remember that we would have discussions among the guys, and among the left wingers, and we'd say, "Hey, we gotta a new situation. It can't be like it was before. We can't foul up the waterfront with the kind of actions we took previously. It's true that it is a struggle that goes beyond just the working class being threatened. It isn't only the working class being threatened; it's the middle class and even some of the capitalists that feel threatened by Hitler. That's why they went to war against him. That being the case, you can't operate like it was two or three years ago, or last year, whatever."

[04:43:43] **HOWARD:** You'd have to have a real political sophistication to accept that, though, wouldn't you? I mean, if you're just a rank and file dock worker, all you're principle-y concerned about is wages and working conditions on your job, and you come in there and say, You have to have a more global view. You have to understand the world crisis and the decay of capitalism—,"

[04:44:01] **ARCHIE:** If you're talking about the average guy, the average Joe, and not talking about the knowledgeable left-wingers, that's different. The average guy, all you say to him, "Hey, we gotta win this war." And he'd say it himself, before you would.

[04:44:17] **HOWARD:** Okay, but this is end of '35 we're talking about.

[04:44:20] **ARCHIE:** Oh, you're talking about '35.

[04:44:24] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[04:44:24] **ARCHIE:** I don't remember. My remembrance about the job actions is that they were put in two categories: some that were completely irresponsible, and some that were needed. We took part in action that was needed, meaning they were violations of the contract by the employers.

[04:44:59] **HOWARD:** That was always a shady area, though, wasn't it? You could always argue certain things were violations. The contract hadn't been spelled out yet that clearly by '35. Sling load limits and specifications for commodities didn't come in till '37, as I recall.

[04:45:16] **ARCHIE:** Well, then I'll tell you something. The discussion about stopping job actions took place, alright, but the job actions didn't stop.

[04:45:34] **HOWARD:** That's what I wanted to hear.

[04:45:35] **ARCHIE:** Yeah, the job actions didn't stop, if that's what you're getting at. Just the same, there was two kinds of job actions, as far as we could tell: some completely irresponsible, anarchistic-type thinking, "Screw these people. Look what they did to us." Those that had that kind of thinking wouldn't care about the rest of the guys. When we got to the point when we said, "Hey, you can't take this irresponsible action," we were surprised at the number of workers who responded to that. Because, by now, they were beginning to make a living. Some money was coming in. They had a family. They had hopes of various kinds. All these things are a two-edged sword so that you fought to better their conditions—you did better their conditions—and now what they want is a more stable life than they had before.

[04:46:58] **HOWARD:** So, if these guys were following the Party's position on cooling out on job actions, it was for conservative reasons, not so much because they said the Party's right on top of it politically. Sounds like the conservatives followed the Party. The guys who were stable and had a good income.

[04:47:12] **ARCHIE:** Sounds like the party was meeting the wishes and the feeling of the workers, whereas before '34, during '34 and part of '35, they met the feelings of the workers because the workers were mad, and they wanted something done. The Party led them in struggle; they were with it. After they won certain conditions, they began to feel that they wanted a more stable life, and the party felt that and made some changes.

[04:47:38] **HOWARD:** That's the process, not so much the Party—you're saying it emerged from the rank and file then.

[voices in the background]

[04:47:44] **ARCHIE:** Oh, I'm saying it merged. I'm saying that both things came together. We didn't suck it out of our thumbs as policy. We realized what the situation was. "You want a union? You want to keep what you got? You're giving these guys weapons if you keep on this stuff of irresponsible job actions that aren't agreed to by the majority of the workers." If they're agreed by the majority of the workers, that's another story.

You know you had—[speaking to Esther] oh, Christ, how many did they going he'd give us? 20?

[04:48:18] **ESTHER:** No, just two. One for upstairs, one for downstairs. One for Ginny, and one for us, right?

[04:48:23] **ARCHIE:** That's right, good.

[04:48:25] **ESTHER:** Well, I do all right. Hope I don't disconnect you.

[04:48:33] **ARCHIE:** If the party doesn't reflect what's happening, they're out of their minds. That's where they make a mistake, left or right mistakes.

[04:48:40] **HOWARD:** But mistakes do take place, right? I'm just trying to figure out if you think this was a mistake.

[04:48:45] **ARCHIE:** Oh, no, no, no. I don't think that was a mistake. I don't think the attempt to stabilize the union was a mistake. Now there were some specific tactical mistakes that were made in the process. People went overboard, no question in my mind.

[04:48:59] **HOWARD:** At the '35 thing?

[04:48:59] **ARCHIE:** At the '37 thing, yeah. Right, right. Oh yes.

[04:49:03] **HOWARD:** Okay, like what? Can you be specific, without naming names? What do you mean by going overboard?

[04:49:09] **ARCHIE:** Well, I think that finally the process of it is the M&M.

[04:49:14] **HOWARD:** Oh, you mean a long-term—

[04:49:15] **ARCHIE:** Yes. Browder did—you have build-up. You have residue.

[04:49:20] **HOWARD:** You trace the origins of M&M to the post-'35?

[04:49:24] **ARCHIE:** Well, I don't trace it to that. But there was a development in industry. There's another development, and there was an argument, which way to go about that. Shall we give up our conditions for more money and so-called security? Or shall we fight like we did before and tell 'em we're not going to do it. We're going to keep our gang size; we're going to keep our conditions. That's what we want in the contract, eh? Or, well, we got it later on, but the wage guarantee, and so on. That was the difference in the struggle.

[04:50:05] **HOWARD:** It's interesting, now that you mention it, because the M&M period and that post-'35 period are similar. In post-'35, the Party seemed to be arguing that you had to be sensitive to public opinion.

[04:50:18] **ARCHIE:** To the workers' opinion on the job.

[04:50:20] **HOWARD:** I thought it was public opinion. I thought that's what you were arguing last time, that it was more or less the public was getting upset with what was going on in the waterfront, and workers were getting uppity. They'd had enough.

[04:50:31] **ARCHIE:** Workers were responding to that, too. But the workers were also saying, "Hey, we have to have some stability. I got a family. Have to take a check home sometime. Can't be here all the time. Every time something happens, we walk out? Can I take a check home? It's alright for a while, but how long does it take?"

I'm not saying that this wasn't also a response to public opinion. Hey, I'm not saying that. It's also a response to public opinion. People get influenced, don't they? Influenced by what goes on in the papers and what their neighbors say, so on and so forth. Maybe sometimes they shouldn't, but they do. I'm not saying it didn't, it wasn't also influenced by public opinion. But by this time, the workers had felt this was the way to go.

Now, in Local 10, when the M&M came along, there wasn't a feeling that this is what we should do. There wasn't that feeling. Very, very—they voted for it, finally, on the M&M. They voted for it, but very, very cautious, skeptical—

[04:51:44] **HOWARD:** Reluctant?

[04:51:44] **ARCHIE:** Reluctantly, skeptical about the thing. Then later on, when those agreements came up, San Francisco local turned them all down except the very last one. Not the coast. San Francisco local. All down except the very last one.

[04:52:03] **HOWARD:** The M&M you mean?

[04:52:04] **ARCHIE:** No, no, no.

[04:52:05] **HOWARD:** After M&M?

[04:52:05] **ARCHIE:** After M&M. There was—

[04:52:06] **HOWARD:** Pedro fought it, too, for a long time.

[04:52:09] **ARCHIE:** Pedro fought it.

[04:52:09] **HOWARD:** They turned down M&M.

[04:52:10] **ARCHIE:** Right.

[04:52:11] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[04:52:11] **ARCHIE:** Right.

[04:52:12] **HOWARD:** Which is interesting. Where the Party's influence was minimal, they're the most militant. What does that tell you?

[04:52:18] **ARCHIE:** Well, I don't know. Pedro had a lot of tradition on the question of economic militancy. They had a lot of tradition on that. And a lot of Wobbly effect. A lot of Wobbly leftovers. That's what I would say about it.

[04:52:49] **HOWARD:** Okay. I think that's pretty much what I wanted to cover today. That's great. It allows me to plug up all the little gaps hopefully.

[04:52:55] **ARCHIE:** Right.

[END PART TEN]